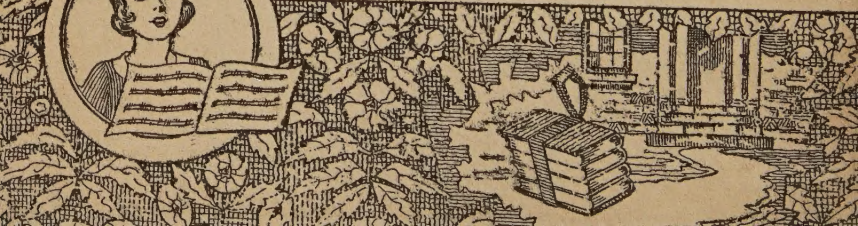


# Kate Martin's Problem



MAY HOLLIS BARTON





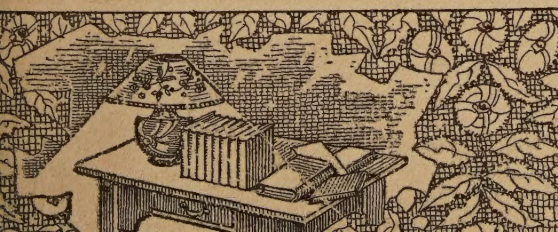


This is my Book

*Alex Muckler 2002*

FROM

A large, ornate rectangular frame with decorative scrollwork and tassels at the bottom. It contains the title "This is my Book" at the top, a handwritten name and date "Alex Muckler 2002" in the middle, and a dashed line for a signature. To the left of the frame, the word "FROM" is printed on a small rectangular label.





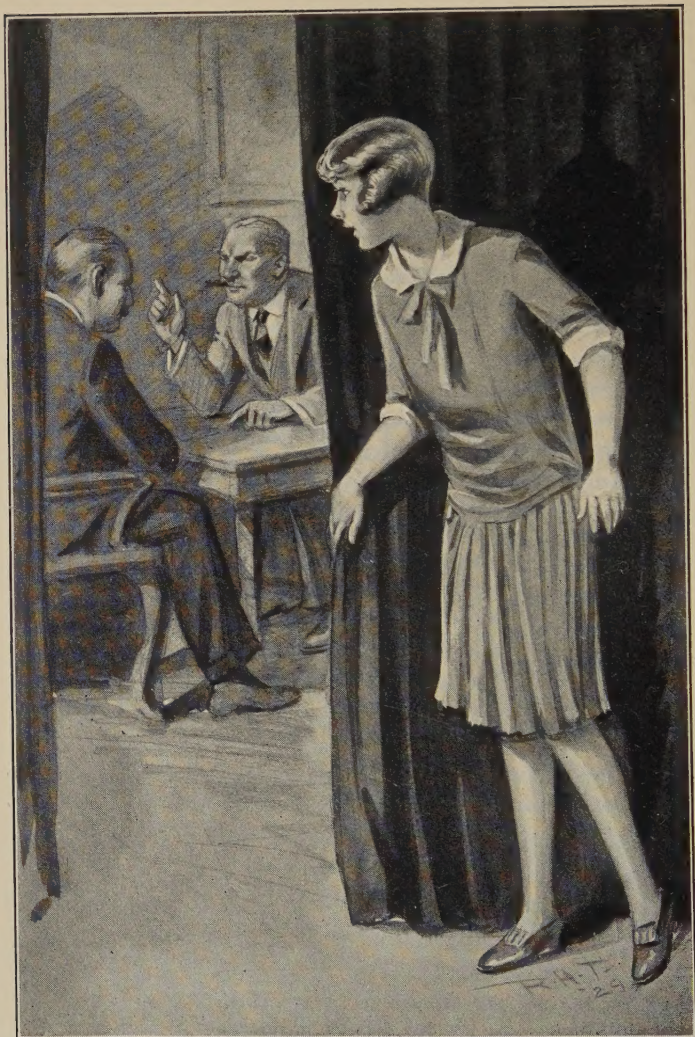




J Seis

1400

ibm 6605



"I DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE TAKING SUCH A CHANCE,"  
SHE HEARD THE LITTLE MAN SAY.

"Kate Martin's Problem"

Page 63



# Kate Martin's Problem

OR

Facing the Wide World

BY

MAY HOLLIS BARTON

AUTHOR OF "NELL GRAYSON'S RANCHING DAYS," "HAZEL  
HOOD'S STRANGE DISCOVERY," ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED*

NEW YORK  
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

# Books for Girls

By MAY HOLLIS BARTON

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY

Or Laura Mayford's City Experiences

THREE GIRL CHUMS AT LAUREL HALL

Or The Mystery of the School by the Lake

NELL GRAYSON'S RANCHING DAYS

Or A City Girl in the Great West

FOUR LITTLE WOMEN OF ROXBY

Or The Queer Old Lady Who Lost Her Way

PLAIN JANE AND PRETTY BETTY

Or The Girl Who Won Out

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

Or The Old Bachelor's Ward

HAZEL HOOD'S STRANGE DISCOVERY

Or The Old Scientist's Treasure Box

TWO GIRLS AND A MYSTERY

Or The Old House in the Glen

THE GIRLS OF LIGHTHOUSE ISLAND

Or The Strange Sea Chest

KATE MARTIN'S PROBLEM

Or Facing the Wide World

CUPPLES & LEON Co., PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY  
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

KATE MARTIN'S PROBLEM

Made in the U. S. A.



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A TURNING POINT . . . . .	I
II. THE UNEXPECTED LETTER . . . . .	10
III. THE SALE . . . . .	18
IV. GLARING BLACK EYES . . . . .	26
V. A PALACE OF MARBLE . . . . .	35
VI. AT THE JOURNEY'S END . . . . .	43
VII. LIFE IN CRAIGWAY . . . . .	51
VIII. AN UNINTENTIONAL EAVES- DROPPER . . . . .	59
IX. GAY COLORS . . . . .	67
X. A CRISIS AT THE DOWLINGS . . . . .	77
XI. MR. PEAWEE LENDS A HAND . . . . .	85
XII. A CHARMING OLD LADY . . . . .	96
XIII. ALONE IN A STRANGE CITY . . . . .	103
XIV. PACKING PEANUTS . . . . .	115
XV. JOB HUNTING AGAIN . . . . .	122
XVI. CUTTING DOWN . . . . .	133
XVII. PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE . . . . .	140
XVIII. WAITING . . . . .	148

## Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. KATE HAS A HOME . . . .	159
XX. A CATASTROPHE . . . .	167
XXI. FUNDS ARE RUNNING LOW . .	175
XXII. FRANK ATTEMPTS TO HELP . .	182
XXIII. FAINT HOPE . . . .	188
XXIV. BLUE SKY AHEAD . . . .	194
XXV. WHAT KATE FOUND WAITING .	200



# KATE MARTIN'S PROBLEM

## CHAPTER I

### A TURNING POINT

"OH, look! He's breaking out!"

Kate Martin, pointing excitedly toward the pigpen, dashed across the yard. "I bet I can catch him!" she exclaimed.

"Better not try, Kate. You'll slip in the mud." Mr. Thompson was always giving kindly advice, and his young neighbor was always carrying out her own ideas, despite the advice.

The little red pig, after squeezing its way to freedom, wobbled across the farmyard toward the chicken house.

Running at full speed, with blond hair blowing, Kate pursued the animal. Once she almost fell, as her foot came down upon a rolling corn-cob.

"I'll get him in this corner!" she exclaimed aloud, breathless.

"Yes, maybe you will," the man responded

doubtfully. "Never be too sure what pigs will do. They usually do the opposite thing."

After cornering the little fellow, the girl suddenly stooped and grasped his back with her hands. But the pig squirmed and darted to one side before Kate could balance herself, and only by throwing her hands against the red wall of the chicken house could she keep from falling.

The pig was evidently not thinking far ahead, for he ran back of Kate, swishing his muddy little curled tail right against her tan stockings.

Turning quickly, the girl clasped her hands about the little body, then, holding him far from her dress, she walked over to the pen and dropped him over the fence.

"Your pigs aren't at all polite, Mr. Thompson," she called, as she ran toward him. "First he got his tail against my stocking and then, when I carried him, he tried to wipe his muddy feet on my dress."

"You don't mean it!" the man said, amused.

"What do you think they say when they squeak like that?" Kate asked.

"Well," he answered, sending a puff of smoke into the air, "I think he was asking you to leave him alone."

The girl washed her hands at the pump, then sat down on the porch. There was still a sparkle in her eyes and a delicate pink in her cheeks, but



as she sat in repose a brooding look came into her face.

Suddenly she buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud. The blond hair fell forward and swung lightly in the breeze.

Mr. Thompson, from the corner of his eye, glanced at the young figure. Then he stepped over and sat down by her side.

"Now, little girl, don't spoil that pretty face of yours. Everything will come out all right. You must believe that it will."

"Oh, you've been so good to me," Kate said, fishing out her handkerchief. "Ever since—ever since it happened—I don't——" Unruly tears again forced themselves into the blue eyes and the girl once more buried her face in her hands.

"I can't help cr-cr-crying," she sobbed.

Mr. Thompson placed a protecting arm about her shoulder. "Just try to be brave," he said. "You stay with Molly and me just as long as you want to, and you can go right on to school this fall, too."

"Oh, but I can't make it any harder for you!" the girl exclaimed, looking at him through tear-dimmed eyes.

She noticed the frayed edge on the farmer's blue shirt. Then her eyes wandered to the fences which needed repairing and to the steps which

one had to walk up at one side so that one did not break through.

No, when her benefactor could not even afford to buy wood to repair the fences, it would be a shame to impose further on his good nature. She simply could not go on staying with him!

Ever since Kate Martin was a small child she had lived near Rockdale. Any one could show you the Martin house, a small, white, frame cottage, set back from the main road, in summer always surrounded by shrubbery and old-fashioned flowers. It was, too, the scene of many a lawn party when Kate would invite all her friends in town. They would bring their lunch, and Mrs. Martin, a small, chubby woman, would serve lemonade.

While Kate inherited her mother's disposition, she resembled her father in appearance. Like him, she was tall and fair. Her childhood had been one happy series of days, with the exception of an occasional forbidden picnic or dose of medicine.

Then, near the end of her freshman year at high school, a great calamity came. Mr. and Mrs. Martin, while driving home from Rockdale one evening, were speeding along toward the railroad tracks. They knew the schedule of trains and knew that there was none due at this time.

But they did not reckon with the possibility of a special train, and, as they turned the sharp curve, they came suddenly into sight of the train speeding toward them.

They could turn out into the deep ravine to either side, or try to cross the tracks. Unfortunately, they took the latter choice and were hurled into the air, dying not many hours later at the hospital.

The homestead was heavily mortgaged, and after it was sold and the debts were paid, there was little money left. Meanwhile, Kate was without funds and was not in touch with any relatives.

Her neighbor, Henry Thompson, a bachelor miller, and his sister Molly had taken care of the girl. But they were poor, too, and Kate knew that she must face the problem herself. She must make her own living.

At that moment the girl's thoughts were interrupted. The screen door banged and an elderly, stout woman stepped out on the porch.

"I guess you forgot to tell her about Hornby, didn't you?" The woman had a complacent tone. She implied, too, that Mr. Thompson would forget his ears if they were not fastened on securely.

"That's right, Molly!" he exclaimed, slapping his knee by way of emphasis. "I did forget it."



Then, as Molly reëntered the door, he turned to Kate.

"I've been asking around about selling your things," he said. "Yesterday——"

"Oh, but I hate to sell them!" the girl interrupted. "Isn't there any way? Couldn't we do something so I could keep them and stay there?"

"Now, Kate," the miller replied gently, "you know we've gone over all that every day for the last week. No, you know you must sell them. Now, since the Sampsons have bought the place they won't have room for your stock. Don't you see?"

The same conversation had been exchanged many times before. The banister of the rickety porch could probably have recited the reasons for the sale, they had heard it rehearsed so many times.

"Yes, I do see, Mr. Thompson—I mean I'll try to see. Excuse me for interrupting you. I won't say a word about it any more."

"Well, yesterday I saw Hornby in town. He said he'd take the chickens and the ducks; and after I'd talked for a little while he said he'd take Betsy, too."

"Betsy, too?" The girl wailed the question from the depths of her heart. "Do I have to give her up? Why, I——"

"Now, little girl, will you tell me what you'd

do with the cow? Betsy'll have a good home with Hornby, and you can go over and see her any time."

Suddenly Kate brushed the last truant tear from the blue eyes and jumped up.

"I'm just a big baby—that's what I am. But I do hate to have everything gone. It's just like taking a brush and painting over all your memories—or like—or like spilling a bottle of ink on a map and blotting out a whole town."

"That's the old girl! Bring out the imagination! That's the stuff!" he exclaimed. Mr. Thompson had a reputation for throwing off cares. He had never been known to take on any responsibility, and he had never been known to have a worry.

Kate arose suddenly and walked toward the front gate, but, on an afterthought, she again turned.

"I'm going to swing in the hammock awhile," she said.

"You'd better be careful about that rope," Mr. Thompson admonished.

"Oh, it won't break with me," the girl replied.

Any one looking at the tall, willowy figure would know that a rope would have to be very fragile to break under such little weight.

Back under two elms a queer arrangement was swinging as though an invisible hand pulled it

back and forth. Closer inspection showed it to be made of an old, worn, red carpet with two ropes fastened to either end.

This evening Kate wanted to be alone with her thoughts. She wanted to dream out under the stars, and try to think out some of her problems.

"But thinking won't help," she mused to herself as she was swinging back and forth. "I must do something! I simply must! School will close to-morrow and—and I just have to get busy at something."

Suddenly Rover, who had been lying on the ground by the trunk of the tree, began to bark furiously. It was no signal for alarm, because Rover became boisterous over the approach of any kind of a vehicle. He was an old-fashioned dog, and had failed to keep pace with modern inventions. The speed of an automobile had no more meaning to Rover than the wheels of a carriage.

"Are you announcing the neighbors, Rover?" Kate asked of the dog. She hurried to the gate, having recognized the Sampsons' mud-spattered car. Since they had moved into Kate's old home, she had become very well acquainted with them.

The car stopped and Mr. Sampson called to her.

"Was down to Rockdale when the afternoon



train came. Thought you might like me to bring your letter along."

She reached for the letter and he handed her a thick white envelope with a rich gold border on the flap. "Miss Kate Martin, Rockdale, Missouri."

What a thrill! Who could it be from? She turned it over and over, delirious with impatience but almost afraid to open it.

## CHAPTER II

### THE UNEXPECTED LETTER

HEAVY linen stationery, and with a golden border! What a glorious thing it must be to write on that kind of paper! As she was caressing the envelope with her fingers, half afraid of its contents, she whirled suddenly about at the sound of a voice.

"Why, hello, Kate! You look as if you were walking on eggs. What's the matter?"

There was Frank Coburn jumping out of the car. Frank had been a friend in need during this time of trial. He was a senior at the high school, and many a time Kate, as a freshman, had been helped along the road by his kindly advice.

Kate slipped her letter into the big pocket of her apron, and as she looked toward him she tried bravely to smile.

"Oh, I'm all right," she answered. "Won't you come on up and sit on the porch?"

"Run you a race up there!" Frank exclaimed, starting to trot along the path. Kate suddenly

darted forward—fairly flew along. From the side she could see Frank following closely behind. Then, just a few yards away from the porch, he pushed on ahead and dashed up the steps. By the time Kate reached the bottom step, Frank had swung around and was grinning broadly.

"Sometime," Kate exclaimed, shaking her finger threateningly, "I'm going to practice and practice just ever so long until I can go like the wind. Then, when you challenge me, I'm going to pass you right at the end, just as you did me. Then I'm going to laugh and laugh."

Frank chuckled softly. It was his habitual form of racing with Kate. After teasing her along, letting her think she was winning, he would go right ahead and become the victor without trying.

"Oh, you will, will you?" he laughed.

Kate's brow suddenly clouded. She felt hurriedly in her pocket. It was empty! Jumping to her feet, she looked frantically up and down the path.

"Oh, there it is!" she exclaimed. A short distance away in the grass was the white oblong object. Frank followed her eye, rushed ahead, picked up the letter, and, with a bow of grandeur, presented it to the girl. But as she extended her hand for it, he became curious. He withdrew the letter, examined it, and looked at Kate.



"Gee, that's a good-looking letter!" he exclaimed. "What's his name, Kate? You never told me a word about it. Who is he?"

"Oh, don't be silly!" Kate returned, reaching out and taking the letter. "Can't you see that isn't a boy's writing? I'm almost afraid to open it, Frank. Here!" and she extended it to him. "You open it for me."

He carefully slit the top edge with his knife so as not to ruin the gilt edge of the flap. Then, drawing the letter half out, he again bowed and handed it to her.

"You've been reading about some medieval knights, haven't you? Never saw you so polite in my life." But as she speculated on the cause for his politeness, she quickly unfolded the letter.

"Oh, Frank! Oh, look! It says 'Dear Niece.' Why, Frank, it must be from Aunt Agnes. Gosh, I'm going to faint. Come on—you have to help me read it!"

Together they scanned the lines.

"We have just returned from abroad and heard of your terrible misfortune. You will no doubt need some help from us since you have no other relatives. On the twenty-eighth of June your Uncle Jasper will drive through Rockdale and expect you to be ready to come along with him. He has some business to attend to some

miles further than Rockdale, and, of course, he will expect you to be ready on his way back.

“AUNT AGNES.”

“Frank, did I read that aright? Oh, are they really asking me to come?” Kate, with arms down beside her on the porch, raised her weight several times with her arms taut. Then she took the letter from the boy while he was rereading it.

“Isn’t that glorious? Why, Frank, what’s the matter? Don’t you think it’s glorious?”

Instead of showing his enthusiasm, he had been regarding the white sheet curiously.

“Why, it’s a wonderful chance for you,” he replied. “It’s just the thing you need.”

Then, after Kate had read the letter again, her eyes rose from the paper and rested on Frank.

“Oh, I see what you mean,” she said slowly. “I didn’t think of that. It does sound cold, doesn’t it? She doesn’t say ‘lovingly’ or anything at the end. It sounds like a business letter. Oh, gee! I didn’t see that at first.”

“Oh, that’s nothing!” Frank exclaimed vigorously. “I wouldn’t think a minute about it.” Frank was always like that—trying to smooth things over and make them appear right.

“Oooh! that *is* a terrible letter,” Kate pronounced. “Mother used to tell me about how

awfully rich the Dowlings were, but 'they're not happy,' she said."

Frank gave a low whistle. "It looks to me as if this solves your problem," he remarked. "You didn't know what to do or where to go. Why, this is just as though your fairy godmother had come along and fixed the whole thing for you. Pretty lucky, I'd say."

"Lucky?" Kate responded, looking reproachfully through wide, blue eyes. "Lucky? Why, Frank, I'd be perfectly miserable! Imagine me living there with an aunt and uncle I didn't like and—and leaving you and Mr. Thompson and Rockdale. Oh! I wouldn't like that at all."

"Kate, if a million dollars dressed up and walked down the street to meet you, you'd simply pass it up like old shoes, I believe. Don't you see, Kate? One doesn't have breaks like this every day. Why, if something like this should happen to me, I'd want to run up the road as far as I could, and then when I was too out of breath to go any farther, I'd fall down on a grassy mound and laugh to the skies."

In face of Frank's happy philosophy, a tiny smile spread over Kate's mouth.

"Do I have to go?" she asked. "Do you think I really have to? You know what I was thinking the other day, Frank," she continued, without waiting for an answer. "I was thinking that



I might get a job selling at some store in Rockdale this summer, and then maybe this fall when I went to school I could work after school and in the mornings. You see, I could stay here with Mr. Thompson, and I'd really be earning my own way."

In his customary ambling gait, Mr. Thompson approached the porch. With a pleasant nod to Frank he walked on toward the kitchen.

"Oh, Mr. Thompson, I almost forgot that you haven't seen my letter," Kate called. "Just look. It's from Aunt Agnes."

The miller took the letter, glanced at the writing, and handed it back to the girl.

"The writing's too fine for me to read without my glasses," he said. "Read it to me, Kate."

After hearing the letter, he took his pipe from his mouth slowly and looked at the girl.

"Well, if that don't sound like a story book!" he pronounced solemnly. "Seems to me, Kate runs into luck every time she needs it."

"But, Mr. Thompson, they're awfully rich, and Uncle Jasper is awfully grumpy. Mother said he was. But I know what you think, Mr. Thompson! You think I always want to do the wrong thing at the wrong time and——"

"Now, now, Kate, don't you mind what we think. You just do what you think is best. If

you don't want to go, just write your aunt and tell her so."

With such a simple solution, Kate turned to Frank as though silently asking his advice.

"What do you think?" she finally asked.

"You must go, Kate," Frank answered seriously. "It's the thing to do and you must do it. Why, all kinds of fine things might happen, and you might be tickled to death that you went. Let's see," he continued, "the Dowlings live in Craigway, don't they? Why, that's not far from where I'm going to be! Good night! Conningsburg is only about ten miles away, and that's where I'm getting my job. That's great, Kate! I'll come over to see you and we'll talk over old times. Gosh, you won't have time to get lonesome."

"You didn't tell me that," the girl said half reproachfully. "Will you actually be there? Actually?"

"Honest to goodness," he said, laughing. "That is, when I'm not at Craigway seeing you." Frank jumped to his feet. "Here I promised dad I'd come right back, and I forgot all about it."

"Will you write to me if I go?" Kate called, as he hurried down the path.

"Surest thing you know!" he promised. "I'll write as soon as I get your address."

Kate watched until Frank was out of sight.

Then she turned slowly and heaved a deep sigh.

It had been so chummy-like while the boy was there! Now it was lonely.

The undertaking was such a big one, and she knew so little about city ways.

"Maybe I won't fit in at all," she murmured. "Oh, dear! I don't know—I really don't know."

Then, very slowly, she drew herself up.

"Kate Martin," she murmured severely, "this will never do. I guess if a boy like Frank can step out you can step out too."

## CHAPTER III

### THE SALE

THREE days later excitement reigned supreme. The Martin homestead was the center of all roads in the vicinity of Rockdale, for there was a vendue scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

It was not necessary to be in need of furniture in order to attend. People flocked from near and far because sales were sources of interest. Then, too, one might buy something cheap if there were no other bidders.

But the dusty road contained not alone expectant neighbors. Within sight of the house walked a tall, slim girl, trudging over the dirt road as though she dreaded to arrive. She did dread it. She had shuddered at the thought for days, and each evening when it came one day nearer, the nearness tugged at her heart and weighed heavy on it.

"Hello, Kate!" called a friend sitting under the tree.

"Why, hello, Nell! Did you come all the way



in to-day?" It seemed that even many farmers from miles around had come.

As Kate opened the white picket gate and walked up the flagstone path she looked about at the people. It seemed as though every one was there! And many faces she had never seen before.

Then her face brightened. Perhaps if a great many people were there, the things would all be sold and they might bring good prices.

Most of the furniture had been moved outside, and curious women were gathered about different objects inspecting them and commenting on their durability and value. There was the old-fashioned sewing machine which had belonged to her grandmother and which was still in good condition.

"Why, that's a real antique," she heard one woman remark as she passed the machine. "If any antique collectors come this afternoon I know they'll want it." Kate loitered a minute, then walked on. She had never thought of any antiques being in their home. Well, perhaps there might be other valuable things, too.

"All right; let's go!" A deep voice broke through the crowd. The buzzing voices ceased and every one moved toward the front porch, forming an irregular semicircle.

"Now, folks, we'll start with the sewing ma-

chine. Who'll start it? How much am I bid? Com'on now. Here's a crackin' good machine. It's in good shape, folks—dandy shape! Com'on—who wants to get this bargain?"

Kate in the front row of the semicircle looked about timidly. Was no one even going to make a bid? Then from the right came a voice.

"Two dollars!"

The humdrum voice of the auctioneer continued. "Two dollars, folks! Two dollars. Who'll bid three dollars? Three dollars? Who wants it for three? What? You say two-fifty? All right, we've got two-fifty! For two-fifty! Who'll bid three?"

Evidently the sewing machine was not going to bring much. Kate thought of the antique dealers she had heard mentioned. They must not have come. Or perhaps that was one of them who had done the bidding.

Again the monotonous voice rumbled on. The girl wanted to shut her ears and run away. She felt she would scream if she stayed and listened to the sale.

"Going at two-fifty? Two-fifty? A-l-l r-i-g-h-t! Gone at two-fifty!"

With open mouth and wide eyes, Kate stared at the auctioneer. To think that such a good piece of furniture could possibly be sold for two dollars and a half!

Next came the oak dining-room set—a table and four chairs. The man of the gruff voice cajoled, coaxed, yelled, and performed all sorts of antics, but the crowd was stolid. They had no doubt come out of curiosity and were not interested in buying. The five pieces were sold for four dollars and a half to a strange little man with whiskers and a red face.

Finally Kate could stand it no longer. She edged her way through the crowd and walked slowly toward the gate, desolate and sick at heart. Each piece of furniture arrayed on the front porch and in the yard brought memories. She could see her mother sitting at the machine sewing one of her dresses. Oh, it was all too horrible to think about! She must get away or she would go mad!

Retracing her steps over the dusty road, she looked back at Rover. He was running along by her side as though he understood her feelings. Kate reached down and patted his head, whereupon the dog looked up with feeling in his big brown eyes.

“How would you like a tramp down to the creek, Rover? Want to go?”

The dog wagged his tail and quickened his steps.

“Did you say you wanted to?”

He became boisterous in his assent and almost

wagged his tail off so eager was he to agree with his mistress.

"Then we'll go," Kate said, giving his head another pat.

Again Rover realized his importance. He ran ahead, frisked about for a time, then pranced back to the girl.

They turned down a path leading through the trees. Under the leaves the cool air was like a blessing. Overhead the branches linked to form a conspiracy against the sun and protect the foliage below from undue heat. A sudden turn in the path, and they reached the water's edge.

Kate sat down on a grassy mound, quickly took off her shoes and stockings and set them back under the foliage. Then she ventured out into the water. The soft sandy mud oozed through her toes and crawled up over her feet. The cool, wet ground was delicious, and the scene of the auction seemed strangely far away.

Rover pranced up and down the bank barking and wriggling in glee. As Kate ventured out a bit farther and walked downstream, the dog came near the water's edge as far as he dared and wagged his tail furiously, but no amount of coaxing would change his mind about the danger of the occasion.

"If you won't go wading with me I'm going to come out," Kate announced, shaking her fin-



ger reproachfully. "I don't think you're a good sport at all."

Rover either did not understand what a good sport was or he chose to disregard Kate's meaning, for he continued to wag his tail as gleefully as though his mistress had promised him a huge beefsteak.

Retracing their steps over the soft cool path beneath the trees, they reached the road where the sun beat down mercilessly. A machine whizzed by and left behind clouds of dust which almost stifled the girl.

"Oh, I wouldn't want to ride, anyhow—would you, Rover? I'd much rather walk along and watch the breeze blow over the fields. It's so pretty to see thousands of fairies with green faces and green hats all doing their daily exercises together. Have you ever noticed, Rover, that they all sway the same way at exactly the same time? They must have been drilled for ages."

For a short time Kate strolled along in the direction of town silently as though in deep thought. There were so many things to think about. And she did not want to think about them at all! They were distasteful and sad, but all too real.

In a few days Uncle Jasper would come. He would probably be some big burly man who never said a kind word. It was very seldom at home

that her mother or father had spoken of the Dowlings, and then it was with a charitable attitude which they always used. They very seldom criticized any one. It was just not their way of doing things.

Mr. Dowling, she remembered, had made his money in stocks and bonds, and for years he had been considered the wealthiest man in Craigway. But she remembered, too, the time when her father had applied for work in the city and had asked Mr. Dowling to help him get the position. Mr. Dowling had done absolutely nothing to help, and after weeks of trying, her father had come home discouraged and hopeless. It was about this time when he had been stricken with typhoid fever, and they had despaired of his life.

Then, when everything seemed black and her mother had gone to see the Dowlings, her Uncle Jasper had said unkind things. Kate had overheard her mother talking about it on her return. Uncle Jasper had said that her father was not practical and that any amount of help would do no good. He had said that the Martins must work out their own salvation. Kate never did understand just what he had meant. What did he mean by practical?

In the midst of her thoughts she heard a loud roaring as of a high-powered car.

"Don't you bark at this car, Rover! It's

going too fast for you." Rover was loath to obey such instructions at other times, but Kate never failed to warn him of the danger.

As the car came nearer and nearer up the hill Kate, by turning around, could see that it was a huge black machine, much larger than any one around Rockdale owned. But instead of picking up speed after climbing the hill, it began slowing up as though at sight of the girl.

Kate was frightened a bit, but continued to walk ahead without looking around. The car came to a full stop by her side and as she glanced up, startled, she saw two men looking at her.

## CHAPTER IV

### GLARING BLACK EYES

KATE MARTIN's blue eyes widened and the girl impulsively shrank back as though in fear. Here she was on the lonely road with no one within calling distance should these strangers in the big black car intend harm. It would do no good to run. Her mind was a whirlwind of ideas, and in the few seconds of her first fright, a million dangers seemed to rise up and engulf her.

By this time the man in the front seat had shut off the engine, while the huge form in the back seat slowly took a cigar from his mouth, waiting a moment before he spoke.

"Don't be afraid, child," he said in a gruff voice. "Do you know where the Thompsons live?"

Far from being reassured, the girl almost trembled as she answered. He had said not to be afraid, but who wouldn't be frightened?

"It's—it's half half a mile farther on," she finally said.



"On this road?" The big man darted the question at Kate as though he could not afford to lose a minute.

"No. Just a little way down on the first road to the left," Kate replied timidly.

Suddenly a thought struck her, but before it was definitely fixed in her mind, the car was roaring along the road. A cloud of yellow dust flew in her eyes and on her clothes, and as she put her hands to her face the thought fastened itself.

Why, of course! That was Uncle Jasper! Who else could it be coming in such a big car and acting so roughly about a little question? And who else would possibly be looking for Mr. Thompson except her Uncle Jasper? Ugh! He was terrible! Those big shaggy eyebrows and glaring black eyes that looked right through you, and his sallow skin—who else could fit that description except Uncle Jasper?

"Gosh! I'm glad I didn't say anything. I'd like to start running in the other direction and never turn around until I was a million miles away—in China or some place, or maybe the South Sea Islands."

But while Kate Martin was imagining the things she would like to do, her feet were carrying her in the direction of Mr. Thompson and the back of her mind was telling her that she had better hurry, for Aunt Agnes' letter had said that

Uncle Jasper would not want to wait after he came. But why on earth had he come two whole days too soon? She had planned and planned all the things she could do on her farewell day—there were loads of people she wanted to say good-by to!

When in sight of the house, Kate looked past the car on to the porch. There she saw the former occupant of the back seat of the automobile talking with Mr. Thompson. In another minute she saw the miller motion toward the road as though in her direction. She quickened her steps and in a few minutes reached the porch.

"Why didn't you tell me who you were down there?" Uncle Jasper asked, looking at the girl curiously.

"I didn't know—I mean you didn't say——" Kate stopped in confusion. She did not know how best to answer. In fact, she was not thinking of any choice of words. She simply could not think when any one was staring at her like that.

"So you're Kate," he said, as though surprised at her appearance. Then he turned to Mr. Thompson. "I've got a good many things to attend to yet," he stated, as though to excuse himself for his hurry. "We'll stop to-night at the hotel in town. Can you be ready the first thing in the morning?" he asked, glancing once more

toward the girl. "We're going to start early," he added, walking toward the car.

A minute later he was gone!

"Huh!" ejaculated Mr. Thompson, as the car sped down the road. "So that's your Uncle Jasper! Remember, Kate," he said, as he turned to open the screen door, "if you don't want to go, just say so. You can always stay here."

"I guess I'd better go, Mr. Thompson," Kate replied, a trifle sadly. "And—I'd like to go and say good-bye to some of the kids this evening. I've got my things almost all packed. I won't stop to eat; I'm not hungry." With that she was off.

"Poor kid, no wonder she isn't hungry!" the man muttered, as he looked after her.

Just on the outskirts of town was Frank Coburn's home. Turning in at the gate, she was surprised to see his father smoking his pipe on the front porch alone. Usually the whole family gathered on the porch after the evening meal.

"What do you think of everybody leaving dad and going off to the country?" Mr. Coburn called. He had a way of making people feel at home. There was always a cheeriness about him. Frank had the same manner.

"They'll be back to-morrow, though," he added, seeing Kate's disappointment.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" Kate exclaimed. "You

see, I'm leaving in the morning for Craigway. My uncle came to-day instead of day after to-morrow."

"Well, I know Frank will be sorry he didn't get to see you. I heard him say that you were going soon, but that he'd get to see you before you left."

At that moment a machine came to a stop outside the gate.

"Oh, Kate!" some one called from the car, "going to town?"

Turning around, Kate saw Nell Blakely and her two younger sisters.

"Yes, I want to," Kate called. "Well, good-by to you, Mr. Coburn. Tell Frank I'm sorry I didn't get to see him."

That evening, Kate Martin's last in Rockdale, sped by almost as fast as her Uncle Jasper's automobile. Her friends were all sorry to see her leave and were sincere in their promises to write.

"But you must come back to see us," Nell Blakely admonished. "And don't dare forget one of us!"

Kate fondly kissed her friends good-by, with the solemnity suggesting the absence of a lifetime. These were the girls with whom she had shared all the play stages from mud pies to paper dolls, and then on through the eighth grade, and



her year in the high school. It was hard now to say good-by to them all, especially when she had no idea of the life before her.

Nell left Kate at the gate and drove on, almost colliding with an oncoming car in her anxiety to look back and wave. As the girl walked up the path, she saw a figure before her in the bright moonlight. It was Mr. Thompson. He was pacing up and down in front of the porch.

Kate was puzzled. Nine o'clock was his customary time for retiring. But there he was, clad in blue overalls and blue shirt, hands behind his back.

Since the house was set far back from the road with many trees in between, one did not always notice the cars passing by. And evidently Mr. Thompson was preoccupied. He was so preoccupied that he scarcely noticed Kate as she silently came up the path.

"Well, you dear," Kate exclaimed, walking up from the rear and linking her arm in his, "I'll bet you just waited up for me! Better be careful," she warned, looking at him mischievously. "You'll lose your beauty sleep. And you'll get l-i-n-e-s," she drawled with exaggerated emphasis. "And you'll get them under your eyes and in all the places you don't want them."

But Mr. Thompson was not to be jogged out of his thoughts so easily. He looked at the girl

with a half smile, a sad one, Kate thought, then he spoke deliberately.

"Little girl," he began, "I've been thinking this thing out, and there's only one thing I'm able to decide. I've looked at it from both directions—I guess from five or six angles—and I always get one answer."

"My goodness, Mr. Thompson, you must be going in for algebra," Kate interrupted merrily. Her feelings were anything but merry, but she wanted to try to take the occasion lightly, if possible, and not let Mr. Thompson see how terribly she really did feel.

"No, it isn't any joking matter," he said soberly. "But it's this, Kate. I think that you oughtn't to go. Of course, it's not just because both Molly and I would rather have you stay. It isn't that. But I don't think you'd like it with your uncle and aunt if they're as you say they are. You're not used to that sort of thing, and you'd have an awful time."

Kate swallowed once or twice and looked up at the miller. She had considered the thing settled. They had all decided that it would be best for her to go, and she had no longer thought about it as an open question.

"But—a—what—what would I do?" she finally asked. "You mean stay here?" Of course, she knew that he meant to stay there. It was a

foolish question, but she hardly knew what to say, or what to think, for that matter.

"Why, yes," he said. "Don't worry about things. Just you stay with us and go to school this fall, just as though you were at home. How would that be? Would you like to?"

"Would I like to?" she gasped. "That would be glorious!" Nothing had sounded so good in ages. To stay! It was like a haven after a storm. Then came the afterthought.

"But I'd be a burden on you, Mr. Thompson, and I wouldn't want to be that." Her objection was immediately overruled.

"Burden? Fiddlesticks! What burden would you be? You're just a bit of sunshine around the place."

"Now, if the railroad would pay the money for the accident, it might be different," Kate said pensively. "Did you hear anything about it?"

"No, Kate, I didn't. I saw the lawyer in town the other day, and he is doing everything he can. But you know a company like that doesn't take the blame for an accident if they can possibly get out of it."

They were sitting on the steps now, and Kate looked out into the night, at the twinkling stars, the half moon, and the cloudless sky. With hands folded in her lap and a serious expression in her eyes, she seemed to be making some de-

termination. All the joviality disappeared, and in its place came something finer.

"No, I must go! I simply must, Mr. Thompson. I wouldn't for the world stay and make things any harder for you. No, I mustn't even think of staying—not for a minute. But it's been grand of you to want me to, just grand!"

Mr. Thompson's eyes were bad, and he heard only the smile and determination shining through the voice. Little drops ran down flushed cheeks unseen.

## CHAPTER V

### A PALACE OF MARBLE

THE next morning only the sun was up before Kate Martin. It threw its rays through the window softly as though bidding her farewell.

"I never did dream so much in my whole life put together as I did last night," Kate thought, as she slowly drew on her brown oxfords. "I think I dreamed of every little cobblestone in Rockdale."

Neither Molly nor Mr. Thompson said much at breakfast, but Kate kept up a rapid fire of talk—what she would do, what she would tell Uncle Jasper, and how she would simply turn around and walk back to Rockdale if she didn't like Craigway.

But down in her heart Kate Martin knew she was trying to be brave and trying to say funny things to keep Mr. Thompson from minding it so much. She knew that he hated to think of her going almost as much as she hated to go, and she did not want their last meal to be sad.



"That sounds like his old lumber wagon now!" Kate exclaimed, jumping up from the table and rushing to the window. It seemed funny to call Uncle Jasper's huge machine a lumber wagon.

"You'd better be careful how you act on the trip," Mr. Thompson warned her, in his kindly voice. "Don't cross him, Kate, and don't make him mad at you. It won't do no good."

"Now, don't you be afraid of how I'll act," the girl replied, laughing. "I'll be as careful as if I were in the schoolroom and the principal came in. I'll try to act really nicely. You know—not only really nicely, but extraordinarily nicely," taking a deep breath.

Stolid Molly laughed at Kate's outburst, but the miller simply shook his head and repeated:

"Yes, you want to be pretty careful, Kate."

At that moment they heard footsteps bounding over the porch, and there, outside the screen, stood Mr. Dowling's chauffeur.

"Ready, Ma'am?" he asked.

Kate rose from the table, rushed upstairs after her bag, snatched her coat and hat from the bed, and was down, ready to leave, in an unbelievably short time. Having kissed Molly and Mr. Thompson good-by, she followed the man outside and saw her Uncle Jasper sitting in the back seat biting impatiently on a big cigar.

"Ready," he said, without removing the cigar

from his mouth, after Kate was seated beside him.

The chauffeur jumped in the front, tossed the suitcase on the seat by him, slammed the door, and they were off. Kate, sitting in the far corner away from her uncle, waved good-by as long as she could see her friends and then timidly glanced across the seat at Jasper Dowling. There he was, smoking furiously, sometimes biting and munching on the end of his cigar, sometimes blowing huge streams of gray smoke into the air while he held the cigar in his right hand.

Kate wanted to talk. She wanted to tell about the different buildings in Rockdale as they passed through the town, and then she wanted to make remarks about the scenery. Surely, since her uncle was not familiar with this country, he did not know all about the hills and the different stories connected with them: How, when the country was first settled, a great battle between the Indians and French Canadians had taken place on that hill over there. Surely he did not know. Why, of course, he did not! Well, she would tell him.

"A—Uncle Jasper—do you see that hill over there to the right? Did you know that was an Indian mound? About a year ago some historians, or somebody like that, started digging in it, and they found——"

"I am trying to work out a problem now, Kate," Mr. Dowling said, taking a large envelope from his inside pocket. The wind rattled the papers and almost blew them out of his hand, but he continued inspecting them, and frowned more and more.

Kate vowed she would never speak to him first again as long as she lived. He was simply unbearable! Imagine it! Anybody not being interested in Indian mounds and relics! He just wasn't human! Let him look at his old papers! Who cared? She hoped the wind would blow them so far that he never could find them again. Or that it would tear them into such little bits that he could never piece them together.

"Pull up here, Sam," he commanded, as they drove through the outskirts of a town. "I've got to see Hines if he's in town."

"He's in Burnside, sir?" inquired the chauffeur.

"I said *if* he was here," Mr. Dowling answered impatiently. "You'd better stop in front of the Dartmouth. I doubt if he's left the hotel yet."

"Yes, sir."

They soon stopped before a beautiful white stone building which Kate thought the loveliest structure she had ever seen. At the entrance were uniformed men who seemed to have nothing to do at all.

Without a word Uncle Jasper stepped out of

the car and walked up the steps of the hotel. Kate noticed now that he was rather stout and was not quick in getting about, as her father had been. In a little while one of the men in blue uniform with brass buttons walked down from the entrance to the car.

"Mr. Dowling asks that you come in, Miss," he said, touching his cap. Kate smiled at him. Those were the first kindly words she had heard since leaving Mr. Thompson.

Rather reluctantly, Kate mounted the steps of the hotel. On approaching the door, another blue uniform opened it from the inside, and Kate found herself surrounded by white marble. There were huge round columns, like sentinels standing guard, and on the floor was a thick green carpet which made one think of a spacious, well kept lawn.

She spied her Uncle Jasper smoking the inevitable cigar, sitting in a large armchair near the desk. She walked over to his chair and smiled.

"Did you want me to come in?" she asked pleasantly.

"Yes. Hines won't be here till later," he explained. "We're going to wait till he comes."

"Oh, isn't that marvelous!" Kate exclaimed, beaming. "I have never seen a place like this!" The girl clasped her hands together and looked

up at the ceiling and the towering walls. "Can this really be marble?" she asked. "Oh, I think it's heavenly! And we're really going to wait here?" This time she stopped for an answer, but she might as well have continued talking, for Uncle Jasper was again biting the end of his cigar and studying the print on a large sheet of paper.

Kate walked over to the nearest pillar and brushed the tips of her fingers over its smooth surface.

"Isn't it gorgeous!" she exclaimed half aloud. The delicate blue, pink and yellow blended with the cream and white. Then she walked to a long lounge, and dropped herself in the middle of it. "Oooh!" she breathed, after a long intake of air. "I didn't know anything could be so soft!" She rose to her feet and tried it again. "Gee!" she said, smiling and shaking her head slowly, "I don't believe I'm actually here! I think I'm still dreaming."

A short time later a little man passed in front of her and walked quickly over to Jasper Dowling.

"Oh, there you are!" he said. "I wasn't expecting you until to-morrow."

"Say, Hines," Uncle Jasper said, addressing the newcomer without preliminary greeting, "I want to get that contract over with to-day, and I haven't got long to stay."



"We can talk better in my room," Hines said. "Let's go up." Then they both disappeared in the elevator.

A few minutes later Kate noticed the chauffeur approaching her.

"He looks quite human now that Uncle Jasper isn't around," she murmured. "He even has a faint suggestion of a smile around his mouth."

"What are you doing—looking around?" he asked pleasantly.

"Oh, yes! Isn't it most glorious?" she exclaimed. "I have never even read about anything half so pretty. Why, it's—it's most too pretty to describe. Don't you think so?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, it's real nice," he said carelessly. "I've seen it a lot of times."

"But does that keep you from thinking it's pretty?" she asked. "Oh, if I'd see it ever so many times, I'd like it just as much. Why, I could look around and around and never get tired at all!"

In too short a time her uncle and the little black-haired man emerged from the elevator, and they all walked out to the car.

"Well, I'm glad we're through with that," Mr. Dowling said shortly. "Get that on its way as soon as you can, Hines," he called out, as the car began to glide away.

The smooth concrete unrolled like a ribbon before them and the big car raced through the countryside like a comet. As they passed other cars they seemed to be going at a terrific rate, but there was little vibration, and even when crossing railroad tracks or rough places where the concrete needed repairing, the springs absorbed all the jars.

Kate had to bite her lips many times to keep back some remark, but as she glanced from time to time at her uncle, she realized that he was probably busy thinking and would not welcome any remarks.

## CHAPTER VI

### AT THE JOURNEY'S END

IN an incredibly short time the travelers came to the outskirts of another town.

"What place is this?" Kate asked impulsively. She had almost schooled herself in keeping back remarks, but it seemed they would pop out, and at the most unexpected times.

"Craigway," Uncle Jasper answered from the corner of his mouth. The cigar tugged at the far corner of his lips and he puffed vigorously, seemingly to catch up with the time lost in answering.

"Oh, so this is where you live! It's a lovely town, but it's much, much bigger than Rockdale. I'll bet I get lost in it quite often. Goodness, we're still going in the same direction, and we're not in sight of the end yet. It must be terribly big."

"Don't stop at the office, Sam," Uncle Jasper instructed the chauffeur. "Go on home first."

After passing through several blocks of the central business section, they rolled on through

residential streets, and before very long Kate found that they had stopped before a large, yellow brick house.

"Is this it? Is this where you live?" she asked all in one breath.

"Yes, this is it," was the answer.

Mr. Dowling opened the door of the car and stepped down to the curb, followed by Kate. After they had crossed the sidewalk, the girl suddenly turned and rushed back to the car.

"Oh, my bag!" she exclaimed. She grabbed it from the back seat and soon caught up with her uncle, who was walking up the steps.

Just after they had stepped inside the door, a small woman came from out the living room.

"So that's Aunt Agnes," thought Kate to herself. "Gee! I'll bet she couldn't smile if she had to."

As if in answer to the thought, Aunt Agnes stretched out her hand and something approaching a smile spread over her face.

"How much like your mother you look," she said, as she kissed Kate. "I imagine you're hungry after that long ride, aren't you? Let me take you up to your room first and then we'll all have a bite to eat."

Kate followed her aunt up the winding walnut stairs. A thick soft brown carpet covered each tread. Aunt Agnes led the way down the cor-

ridor in silence, and Kate, looking eagerly about, followed.

"This is your room," Aunt Agnes said, as she opened the door to the right. "I think you'll find everything you need here. I'm afraid you've had a sad time of it during these months. I would have had you come sooner, if we had been at home."

At this unexpected kindness Kate looked at her aunt. She was amazed that Aunt Agnes would say anything nice at all. Perhaps she isn't such a bad sort, the girl mused. Perhaps I've misjudged her and shall find her altogether different.

"Well, yes, it was sort of awful," Kate said aloud, hesitating. She hated to talk of these things. They opened fresh wounds, reminded her so vividly of what had passed. And she wanted to forget the hurt, forget the pangs of sorrow which had been so real, so poignant, which had almost drowned her in a deluge of tears.

"You can freshen up and be down as soon as you're ready."

As her aunt turned and walked down the hall, Kate felt she wanted to rush after her and tell her that she was starving for real love. Ever since her mother and father had gone, there had been no one to whom she could turn. Although Aunt Agnes was the aunt of her mother, yet their ages had been more that of sisters.



"But Agnes has changed so much since she's married," her mother had said.

They had been fast friends growing up, but since she had become Mrs. Dowling, her sweetness had gradually faded. Mr. Dowling had been a financial success, and at the time of the marriage, Agnes was thought to be making a "good match."

Kate went to the window and gasped.

"What a gorgeous garden!" she exclaimed. Her eyes trailed to the sides, and she saw that it was the neighbor's garden, and not the Dowlings'. Directly below was a well kept lawn, spacious and prim, with two large oak trees toward the center. Along the edge was a carefully trimmed hedge stretching far down to the end of the long yard.

"Oh, I must hurry down! I don't care if Uncle Jasper is rough," she mused. "I think he just likes to try to scare himself."

But she did care. Down below the surface of flippancy she felt that this horrid uncle was very disagreeable. She had never before seen any one at all like him, and now the very thought of him made her lips pucker up.

She walked down the stairs then, and back to the dining room, where she found Uncle Jasper and Aunt Agnes sitting at the table. Uncle Jasper's elbows as he was carving the meat looked

like the legs of grasshoppers. It seemed that Uncle Jasper looked awkward, no matter what he was doing.

"Sit here, Kate," Aunt Agnes said, indicating a chair by her side.

In a minute the maid brought some steaming hot tomato soup and placed it before Kate. The china was a delicately tinted yellow, and Kate thought she would rather just look at the pretty colors than to eat.

"Pretty tough steak!" Uncle Jasper commented, as he maneuvered his elbows back and forth. "Why don't you get something tender?"

"I told Nancy to get tenderloin, but they didn't have any to-day," Aunt Agnes answered apologetically. Mrs. Dowling seemed to be constantly excusing herself for things, either in tone or actual words.

Kate thought of the scenes at meal time when she had been at home. There had been no fussing there. Everything had been happy and cheery. If her father had said something grumpy, both she and her mother would have laughed, because they would know that he was doing it for a joke. But here, things seemed to be so serious—so horribly serious.

Now the maid brought her a plate with a juicy piece of steak and some green beans, and at the side was a dish of salad.

"Isn't that pretty?" Kate said, looking at the tomatoes on the lettuce. Over the dab of yellow mayonnaise in the center, were some strips of pimento, and on top of that, in the very center, was a tiny white cheese ball.

"Do you think so?" replied her aunt rather gently. Uncle Jasper glanced up at the girl, then down at his plate. Evidently, he did not appreciate color schemes in food.

In cutting her meat, a small portion flew off the plate and on to the floor. The girl made a move to pick it up, but suddenly became panic stricken. She glanced at her aunt and uncle all within a second, then, seeing that they had not noticed it, she merely adjusted her chair and cut another piece. She had been very much afraid of her table manners; probably they would think that dropping food on the floor was inexcusable. She had been very careful to observe which fork her aunt used for the salad and whether she mashed her potato or just broke it. Aunt Agnes, it seemed, had a very dainty way of eating.

Chocolate cake and coffee came last. When they arose from the table, the girl could not keep the smile off her face. Such wonderful food! And so pretty! It was all like a dream.

Kate was glad to see that her uncle was getting his hat. She wished that he would forget to come back. He seemed to the girl like an old

bugbear. After Sam had driven him away, Kate looked over at her aunt, a broad smile coming to her lips.

"It's so pretty here!" she said. "You must just love to live here all the time."

"I'm glad you like it," Aunt Agnes replied, with a wan smile. She never did smile very much or very wholeheartedly, Kate thought, but it looked as though she were trying. Perhaps all this time the poor woman had never had anybody to smile at.

"You never did have a child, did you, Aunt Agnes?"

"Yes, Kate, I did," Mrs. Dowling answered sorrowfully, as a shade stole over her face. "I had a little girl. She would have been just two years older than you. She, too, had light hair and blue eyes."

Kate's heart went out to her aunt.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! Was it very long ago, Aunt Agnes?"

"Yes, Kate, she died when she was two years old."

Tears came into Mrs. Dowling's eyes at the memory, and with her dainty lace handkerchief she brushed them away, but more and more came, and Kate's larger one was necessary. Kate Martin placed a protecting arm about her aunt's

waist. It was as though their ages were suddenly reversed.

"Just think—I lost my mother and you lost your little girl!" Kate said pensively.

As Kate stood by her aunt's side, she forgot her own sorrow. It seemed that a sad expression was drawn around Mrs. Dowling's eyes. Kate had noticed it when she first saw her in the hall, and now she thought she understood.



## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE IN CRAIGWAY

DURING the days following Kate Martin's arrival in Craigway she became despondent. She was lonely. She pined for her friends in Rockdale and for the old haunts—the cool creek, the woods, the winding dirt road, the fields, even the rocky, bumpy roads that ran through the town.

All the elegance and grandeur of her new home failed to satisfy the girl, for with it came little warmth of spirit or love. With her dislike of Uncle Jasper, there was growing pity for Aunt Agnes. She seemed in some way afraid of her husband, afraid of what he would think, afraid of his answers, of his looks when he was out of humor. And, to Kate, he seemed out of humor always. There was seldom a pleasant look in his eyes. Only occasionally did he smile, and that was when he had said something he thought was clever. Then he would laugh more like some animal, Kate thought, than like a human being. Like a hyena, perhaps.

One afternoon, when Aunt Agnes had gone to

her bridge club, Kate was browsing around the house, admiring the beautiful furnishings. She had never been in her aunt's room, and curiosity led her along the corridor toward it. She stepped inside the door and gazed about. The paper figure was a blue and pink tiny flower, and the drop ceiling was tinted pink. The curtains were of heavy flowered silk with a solid black border.

"Oh, I'd like them much better to be filmy and light," Kate mused. "And I wouldn't have that kind of wall paper, either. I'd much rather have it painted in a delicate color. If it were *my* room, I'd just have little light-colored rugs all over the floor. I don't like one big one like this. And I despise a dark one."

A walnut secretary stood in the corner, and since it was open, the girl noticed a large box of stationery. It was the same gilt-edge linen sheets, the kind Aunt Agnes had written on when she had invited Kate to come to Craigway.

"I'll never forget the thrill I got when I received that letter," Kate mused. "I thought some fairy must have written it. And now to think I'm really here! Oh, my!" she exclaimed, as her eyes brightened, "I wonder if I couldn't write to Frank on this very paper. He certainly wouldn't think it was from me. I *am* going to," she decided, sitting down before the desk. "And if Aunt Agnes should come home,

why, I'd just drop out the window, because I could *never* let her find me here. I'd simply *die*."

Before very long she had finished the letter to Frank and sealed it.

"I do hope he gets it and answers," she said. "I'm just dying to hear from somebody I know. I'd give anything if I were back in Rockdale. I wouldn't care if I had to wash dishes all day long. I'd get such a thrill out of just being there that I wouldn't care what I did."

Sitting at the desk Kate tried many different poses. First, she made believe she was dictating to a stenographer, as she had seen done in moving pictures. Then she leaned her chin listlessly on her hand, and with a faraway look in her eyes, gazed at the ceiling. A minute after, she would laugh boisterously, and pace up and down the room, addressing imaginary guests.

"I'll bet this room doesn't know how to act with me in it," she thought. "It's used to Aunt Agnes being solemn and frowning every now and then, and not saying a word, just as though she wasn't supposed to have any fun at all. It must be awful to be like that," she concluded.

She again sat down before the secretary and drew Frank's letter from her pocket. "Isn't that horrible writing?" she asked herself. "I must try to do the envelope over again and make it

pretty, so he'll think I'm really growing up. Why, that looks as if I were about nine years old!"

Picking up the pen and dipping it in the ivory inkwell, she poised her hand carefully over the envelope. But the pen never reached the paper.

"You here, Aggie?" The voice did not float into the room. It shot in like a cannon, and it seemed to strike the girl a blow.

"If I could only hide," she thought. That was impossible, for the next moment Uncle Jasper had crossed the threshold!

"What are you doing here?" he snorted.

"Oh, I was just looking at the pretty stationery," Kate replied, attempting to smile.

"Just looking at it!" he repeated, as he took a few steps nearer. "What does this mean?" he roared, as he picked up the letter to Frank. "Writing to boys, are you?"

Kate wanted to snatch the letter from her uncle's hand and dash from the house, never to return. She wanted to stamp her foot and tell him that he was a cruel, ugly, horrid old thing, that he had no right to talk to her in such a way.

"I guess I can write a letter to a friend if I want to!" she blazed, and an angry pink flush spread over her face. "I guess you haven't any right——"

"Haven't any right! Haven't any right! Young lady, remember whom you're talking to.

I'm not used to having people give me any impertinence. I'll have you understand that——"

Kate Martin could not stay to learn what she was supposed to understand. She flew out of the room and down the steps two at a time, only the banister helping her to round the curve without falling. She could hear her uncle fuming in the hall above, and could imagine the expression on his face.

"I don't care," she thought. "If I had done anything terrible, I wouldn't mind. As though I couldn't even go into my aunt's room without almost being whipped!"

As the girl's anger cooled, a few tears trickled down her cheek. Suddenly, she burst out crying. She could no longer stand this intolerance. She had never been used to such treatment, and she felt she could never, never in the world, get accustomed to it.

She walked out of and around the house and sat on the grass beneath the huge oak tree. There always seemed some sort of kindness about trees. Their branches had a protecting air as though to shield people from trouble and care.

"I'd a million times rather be sitting under Mr. Thompson's tree or be swinging in the hammock, even if it is made out of an old carpet and tied up with ropes."

Then she thought of the letter, and fearful lest her uncle had taken it, she quietly stole into the house, listened to hear where her uncle was, and then, seeing him in the living room reading the paper, she quietly walked up the front steps.

The letter was on the desk where her uncle had laid it, and Kate, without trying again to improve on the envelope, walked down to the mailbox at the corner.

"I can hardly wait till I get an answer," she thought. "And I don't know what I'll do if one doesn't come."

That evening was a repetition of many others. Aunt Agnes, Uncle Jasper, and Kate sat in the living room, the two older people reading the paper, and Kate looking through the pictures of a magazine. She loved to read and had read nearly everything in the public library in Rockdale, also in the small school library, as well as her own books; but in this new home, there seemed to be few books.

The Dowlings subscribed to a number of magazines, but Kate did not care for many of them. They were not the kind she enjoyed.

"Don't you like to read?" Aunt Agnes asked.

"Oh, I simply *adore it!*" Kate answered.

"Then why do you sit looking at the pictures?" was the next question.

"And scraping your feet," added Uncle Jasper.



Kate looked up, surprised. How could any one scrape her feet when the floor was covered with a thick, soft carpet? After these weeks at the Dowlings, though, Kate knew better than to contradict any statements, no matter how unreasonable.

"I don't know what there is to read that you have here," she said, hesitating. She did not say that the girls' books she had at home filled a whole bookcase which her father had built for her, and that she had read most of them more than once. Evidently, her uncle and aunt did not care about reading books.

"Aggie, that child certainly can be irritating," Uncle Jasper said, as though he were propounding a great truth. His wife did not comment on the remark, but as Kate glanced up at her, the girl thought she detected a look of pity flit into her eyes.

"Maybe she doesn't think I'm irritating," was the girl's thought, and it helped, if ever so little, to still the hurt.

The first few evenings Kate had retired to her room after the evening meal, but Uncle Jasper soon put a stop to that.

"What's the idea of going off by yourself?" he had asked. "You stay down here with us." So that had settled things.

Uncle Jasper settled down further in his chair

and rattled the pages of his paper. Evidently it was a signal to close the conversation. But at that moment the front doorbell rang and Kate almost collided with the maid in the hall. Any change would have been welcome to break the stiff atmosphere of that living room.

"Special delivery!" announced a man in uniform. Uncle Jasper was always getting telegrams and things. He seemed to Kate as important as the president of the United States.

But the letter was not for Uncle Jasper. It was addressed to Kate Martin and in Frank Coburn's handwriting!

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN UNINTENTIONAL EAVESDROPPER

WITH little ceremony Kate Martin flopped into a chair and became buried in the letter. Even Uncle Jasper's explosion could make no scoring when there was a letter to be read.

"Dear Kate," it began. "Your letter reached me just this morning. It was waiting for me when I came back from my trip. You know I'm in the law office of Paris and Wheeler, friends of my father's, in Conningsburg, and every now and then I'm sent around to other places to collect information for them. I'm busy trying to learn all the ins and outs of the law business, and every day I find out how little I know about it. I hope you're having a nice time in Craigway with your aunt and uncle. As soon as I get my head above water I'll come over to see you. I'll make it just as soon as I can.

"FRANK."

"Isn't that grand!" Kate exclaimed aloud, addressing both her uncle and her aunt. "Frank is

working in Conningsburg and is coming to see me as soon as he can. Oh, I'm so glad! I can hardly wait!"

"Who's Frank?" bellowed Uncle Jasper, pretending not to remember their mention of the boy when he saw Kate's letter addressed to him.

"He's an old friend of mine from Rockdale. We grew up together in the same town and went to the same school. You see, he was graduating from high school last year and I was in my freshman year."

"Isn't that nice!" Aunt Agnes commented.

Uncle Jasper having decided almost before the letter came that nothing would be nice, darted a scathing look at his wife, which was enough to silence her for the rest of the evening.

"Huh!" he grunted, scowling even more, if that were possible, and jerking his cigar from the corner of his mouth. "The sooner you forget your life in Rockdale, the better." That was the end of the matter. Uncle Jasper appeared to be glaring the print off the page of the paper while his wife, thinking it best to discontinue such an unpleasant conversation, also took up her paper, first, however, giving Kate a wan smile.

"Would you mind if I went to bed now?" Kate asked, expecting a hurricane to follow.

"Why, no. Go ahead," Aunt Agnes answered,

after waiting a few seconds to see if Uncle Jasper would want to handle the situation.

The moon was shining brightly through the window at the landing and Kate stopped in silent admiration. Far down the avenue she could see the trees and shrubbery bathed in the soft moonlight.

Slowly she walked up to bed, rapt in thought. The same moon was shining over Rockdale, but it was much prettier there, she decided. She would be sitting out on the porch with Mr. Thompson and Molly, and perhaps some of her friends would be there. When no one was talking you could hear the croaking of frogs in the near-by swamps, and an occasional owl. Perhaps Rover, too, would be announcing his importance with the passing of each machine or buggy.

Lying in bed in the moonlight, she let her eyes wander about the walls. She would like to have an arm long enough to trace out the pattern on the wall paper. Some time she would get a long pencil and follow the design. She pulled the light on and off a number of times, wondering whether time seemed to pass more quickly in the light or in the darkness. Then she slept, dreaming she was flying over the houses in Rockdale and that her long filmy dress was touching the housetops and carrying with it messages of love.

For days she awaited the postman, each day

expecting word that Frank was coming. Then, after the last delivery for the day, she would think, "Maybe he'll just surprise me and not write first." The next morning, however, she would be on hand again waiting, always waiting.

Then came an afternoon when she found two letters awaiting her. How eagerly she took the two up and scanned the handwriting.

"Not from Frank at all," she sighed. "Who can be writing to me?"

The first proved to be an advertisement, offering a special sale of radio sets at greatly reduced prices.

"As if I had money to waste on a radio set!" she thought. "And if I could buy a set, I guess Uncle Jasper would throw it out of the window."

The second letter was not for her at all but for a K. T. Martin living two blocks away. This Kate pasted shut with care and left word to return it to the postman.

One evening in the following week Aunt Agnes went to bed early with a headache. Kate ensconced herself on the window seat behind one of the heavy silk curtains in order to stare out at the star-lit night. She fell asleep after a while. They had had meat loaf that evening for dinner, and Kate strongly suspected she had eaten too much, it had been so very good. She dreamed of giants and ugly dwarfs and witches and of all



kinds of impossible figures. She seemed to be running away, always running away, but she never succeeded in escaping. The giants had loud, ugly, rough voices which roared after her.

The girl awoke and was surprised to find real voices in the room. In the far corner, as she peered from the darkness behind the curtains, were two men sitting by the reading lamp. Her Uncle Jasper was back, just out of the line of light, and, sitting in Aunt Agnes' chair, was a little man with black hair. Yes, that was the same man whom her uncle called Hines and whom they had seen in Burnside at the Dartmouth Hotel. He reminded her, too, of the ugly little man who had bought the dining room set at the sale of her household goods. It was the little man who seemed to be talking, but Kate could not hear very distinctly. They were talking in low tones, although both appeared to be agitated.

"I don't see why you're taking such a chance," she presently heard the little man say. "You'll never be able to whip him into line, and it's entirely too dangerous."

"I tell you, Hines, there's big money in it, and we've got to put it across! I didn't have you come up here to tell me it's dangerous. You've got to help me do it."

"It's bad business, bad business," Hines said thoughtfully.

Kate turned her face to the window. She could not get out of the living room and go to her bedroom. She would have to stay until they left. But what were they talking about? Slowly, as more bits of their talk floated to her end of the room, the girl began realizing the truth. Uncle Jasper was trying to do something in a business way that he should not be doing. He was not honest! That was the first intimation the girl had of such a thing.

"I tell you we've got to whip him into line!" Uncle Jasper repeated in an angry voice. "And you've got to help me do it. It's too late to back out of the thing now."

Before very long the two plotters walked from the room, still arguing, still attempting to reach an agreeable, if not an honest, conclusion. It was evident that Hines' reason for disagreement was not on the basis of honesty. It mattered little to him that the transaction was off color. No, it was the danger which he resented.

In her half-sleepy mind Kate Martin was thinking of their words and trying to understand them. She had little idea of what it was all about, but another, far more terrible idea had been forced upon her. Her uncle was making his money dishonestly! She was living in the household of a dishonest man and being fed and clothed by his tainted money!

Slowly she dragged herself up the stairs, for Uncle Jasper had walked out to the car with Hines, and she could hear faintly the low, guarded speech which came from outside. In her room she lay on the bed, looking with unseeing eyes toward the ceiling.

"I wonder if maybe I didn't understand aright," she thought. "Here I've been thinking all those terrible things about him, and I'm not even sure that he's dishonest. Maybe it's some kind of business that isn't so bad. Or maybe it isn't bad at all." Her mother had taught her always to be generous in judging others.

"Never suspect anybody else of anything that you wouldn't do yourself." Her mother's words came back to her as though she had heard them but yesterday.

"I guess I was awfully quick," she thought. "Just because he's crabby, I thought all kinds of other things about him, too." She freed her mind in half measure, but she could not sleep.

Finally she arose, pulled on the light, and began to read a continued story in a magazine which she had started several days before. It was about a girl living on a farm who had the ambition to go to the city. She soon put it down, however, and picked up a book lying near by.

Suddenly she stood still and listened. She heard a board creak, then some padded footsteps. She

glanced at the clock and saw that it was just twelve.

Kate was not easily frightened, but at this moment she felt completely unnerved. Her heartbeats filled the room, they were so loud, and for a moment she could not hear the oncoming steps. Then the clock began to strike—one—two—three—four—five—six. It was maddening.

Somehow, she lived through the twelve beats, twelve slow, never-ending clangs. But now all was still. Even the footsteps had ceased, and there was no sound in the large house except the tiny click-click of the clock on her mantle.

Then softly there came three measured raps and the knob of the door turned.

## CHAPTER IX

### GAY COLORS

AUNT AGNES, apologetic and pale, entered Kate Martin's room. She wore a dainty white crêpe de chine gown trimmed in fine lace with some pink ribbons in bows. But even in the dainty clothing, somehow or other, Aunt Agnes managed to look drab.

"I was afraid I'd frighten you, dear," she said, seeing the girl's colorless face.

"Oh, I was pretty scared for a minute. I thought of the steps and midnight and spooks at the same time," and Kate laughed nervously.

"Why are you up so late, Kate? I thought you had gone to bed early in the evening. After we left the dinner table I saw you go out and thought you had gone to bed."

"Why, I fell asleep and just woke up a little while ago," Kate answered. "A—and then I couldn't go to sleep again. I don't know, I just didn't feel like sleeping." She did not say where she had slept, because that would bring on other

questions, and she did not want to tell her aunt about the night's discovery.

Kate did not sound like her natural self, and Aunt Agnes was quick to sense the difference.

"Is there anything the matter, Kate? Are you feeling ill?" she asked. "I saw your light and thought you might be sick."

"I don't know. I must have eaten too much dinner," Kate replied evasively. No, she could not confess about her eavesdropping. She could not explain her fear about the dishonest money, and yet she hated to be untruthful. Her aunt always seemed kind, especially if Uncle Jasper was not near. Once or twice Kate was on the verge of confessing her fears, but each time she held back, afraid to tell her aunt of the private interview to which she had been an unwilling listener.

"I'm afraid you're not well," Mrs. Dowling insisted. "You looked very pale when I came in. But, of course, you were frightened by my footsteps. And then I waited because I didn't want to knock just as the clock was striking. I thought that would alarm you more."

Just at that moment the front screen door banged, and Uncle Jasper's heavy footsteps plodded along the hardwood floor toward the steps.

"Good night, dear," Aunt Agnes said, kissing



the girl. "I must run along now. I do hope you can sleep."

Her little form disappeared through the door and down the hall. A few minutes later Uncle Jasper's gruff voice was heard.

"I thought that fellow was never going home," he muttered. His voice had the quality which made it carry to distances, and although it was pitched low, Kate could hear it distinctly.

"It's just like him to say that," Kate thought. "He is always grumbling about what people do that he doesn't like. And I'll bet he made Mr. Hines stay trying to talk him into that old business deal. Well, I hope he didn't succeed!" she muttered half aloud as though to take the walls into her confidence.

"I hope there aren't very many people like him," the girl mused. "If there were, life surely would be awful. If I just had somebody like Mr. Thompson round to talk to, or Frank, or just anybody from Rockdale that I knew, I'd give everything I could think of.

"Receiver of stolen goods!" From some remote place she remembered the phrase. Was she actually in that position? She grew weary and finally fell asleep.

The next evening at the dinner table, Uncle Jasper seemed somewhat ill at ease. He fidgeted around as Kate had never seen him do before.

Once he even spilled the soup from his spoon as he lifted it to his lips, and since it was hot and splashed on his left hand, he growled for several seconds.

When the family had reached the stage of peaches and cream and Uncle Jasper had forgotten the burn on his fat hand, conversation was progressing as smoothly as could be expected. Aunt Agnes was speaking of the very low industrial conditions in town and of the many people out of work. After remarks had been exhausted on that particular subject, Kate had an idea.

"Uncle Jasper, what do people mean when they talk of whipping into line?"

Kate usually said the things that came into her mind and asked the questions which occurred to her at the time they occurred. Many times she realized that she should have thought before expressing herself, but as the realization always came afterwards, it was of no value. When she saw the sudden piercing look from Uncle Jasper, she suddenly understood that a mistake had been made now.

"What do you want to know that for?" he asked accusingly.

"Oh, I just wanted to know," she parried.

"Where did you hear that?" he again asked in a tone fit for a criminal.

"I don't know. I just read it some place,"

Kate answered, with attempted carelessness. "What a stupid thing to say," she thought. "Why didn't I think first?"

Uncle Jasper finished his coffee and left the table.

"I'm going down to the club to-night," he said. Kate had long ago learned that he never answered questions unless he thought they deserved being answered.

"Remember, we're going to start shopping early in the morning," Mrs. Dowling said to Kate while they were reading.

"Oh, that'll be grand!" Kate replied, with enthusiasm. "I've always wanted to go all through the stores and see things. Ours at home weren't very big, you know, and they didn't have nearly so many things as they have here. Our biggest store we called the general merchandise store. I guess that's what you'd call a department store here, isn't it?"

"I suppose that was the ancestor of all department stores," Aunt Agnes replied, smiling vaguely.

Kate was bursting with the desire to talk about what they would look at and what they should buy the next day, but Mrs. Dowling returned to her magazine, and as she answered only in monosyllables the one or two eager questions put to her, the girl soon gave up any attempt at conversation and drifted off into her own dreams and plans.

"I hope we can get all your things in the one day," Aunt Agnes said, as they were walking up the stairs to bed. "I guess we can if the shops aren't too crowded."

"Yes, I guess so," Kate agreed quietly. But inside she was jubilant. Shopping! A whole day buying things just for her! The thought was almost beyond conception.

"I wouldn't care if it took us a hundred days," she thought. "Just think, I'll be able to walk all around and see the pretty things, and maybe I can touch them and imagine that I can buy anything I want."

Once in her own room, Kate pondered again about her uncle's way of making money and of her idea of not using any more of it. Then she repeated to herself her mother's words that had come to her before: "Never suspect anybody else of anything that you wouldn't do yourself." Finally, she extinguished the light and crept into bed.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she murmured. "I wish I had you here to tell me what to do! I'm so alone!" and with the words Kate Martin rolled over, buried her face in her arms, and cried herself to sleep.

The next morning it was raining, and Aunt Agnes changed her mind several times about going to town.

"This rain ends our shopping trip, Kate," was her morning greeting to the girl.

The rain stopped a bit right after breakfast and the sky began to look clearer, so Aunt Agnes said:

"Well, I guess we can go after all. Let's get ready, Kate, and go before the weather fools us again."

But ten minutes after that thick clouds gathered and the rain poured down mercilessly, and again the shopping trip was off. By ten o'clock, however, Aunt Agnes made her decision.

"I don't know what day we can go if we don't go to-day," she said. "Call the office, Kate, and see if Sam can come after us now." So they left in the storm.

"We'll look at dresses first," Mrs. Dowling said, when they reached the first store. "I suppose you need those most."

Elevators were new to Kate and the girl had a hard time suppressing her emotions as they started up.

"You know that time we stopped at the Dartmouth Hotel on our way here, Aunt Agnes? Well, that was the first elevator I ever saw. Of course, I had seen them in moving pictures, but to actually see somebody going right up through the ceiling like the angels going up into heaven—it looked *so* funny!"

"Don't talk so loud, Kate," her aunt cautioned.

The girl glanced about and saw that her remarks had been overheard by other people in the elevator. A few of the passengers were looking at her with amusement in their eyes.

"Well, I guess they might have thought the same things themselves once," she thought.

Once in the dress department, Kate was all aglow. Her blue eyes seemed twice their ordinary size as she saw the gay-colored frocks hanging about. A salesgirl was talking to Mrs. Dowling, and after her aunt had beckoned to her, Kate walked over to them.

"We want to get three or four good serviceable dresses," Aunt Agnes told the salesgirl. "We don't want them to be too bright. Her uncle doesn't like such gay colors."

"He's just like a ghost," Kate thought, "always coming there when you think he's some place else. I don't see what he has to do with my dresses, anyhow." But her indignation was not expressed and she followed along obediently.

"Size sixteen?" asked the girl.

"Yes, I think she'll take that. She's rather large for her age. But be sure that they're not old-looking dresses. She's still a child."

How Kate despised being spoken of like that! Maybe she was still a child, but people didn't have



to make such a fuss about it! Besides, she was taller than her aunt.

The first dress was a cerise-colored linen, with straight lines and large white buttons down the front.

"Isn't that adorable!" Kate exclaimed impulsively, taking hold of the hem and spreading it out. "Don't you just love it?"

But her aunt did not love it.

"I'm afraid it's too bright," she said.

"Oh, but I *love* bright colors," Kate said. "I adore them!"

"Now, Kate, do be sensible. You know your uncle, and you know that he has definite ideas about women's clothes."

"Oh, it's none of his business what women wear!" Kate exclaimed sullenly. "He ought to have enough to do to take care of his own."

"Now, Kate, that isn't like the polite girl I want you to be," her aunt admonished. There was no anger in her voice, just a tired softness.

"I'm sorry, Auntie," Kate said. "I didn't think." She was always sorry she let her outbursts carry her away when her aunt was the victim. She always tried to be kind and courteous to her aunt in view of Uncle Jasper's impatient treatment of his wife.

"What about the tan one over there?" Aunt Agnes inquired. "Isn't that made the same?"

"That's lovely too!" Kate exclaimed, even though she thought it far less pretty than the cerise.

Some time later they walked away from the department carrying a large box.

"We'll have them sent," Aunt Agnes had said. But Kate could not hear of it.

"*Please* let me carry them," she had begged. "I want them with me every minute. Just think, I'd have to wait till to-morrow to try them on."

In the short time remaining before lunch they bought two hats and a pair of black patent-leather pumps.

"They're simply darling!" she said several times, as the clerk buttoned the strap. "Can't I keep them on now, Aunt Agnes?"

"They'll be ruined before you get home," Mrs. Dowling replied. "It's still raining."

"Oh, I forgot," Kate said. "I always forget everything when I'm looking at pretty things."

## CHAPTER X

### A CRISIS AT THE DOWLINGS

KATE MARTIN was still looking daily for a letter from Frank Coburn. But each morning and afternoon delivery brought the same result—no word from the boy. She was getting so desperate that any familiar face would have been a godsend.

At one of these times a letter came from Mr. Thompson. It was laboriously written, in a large scrawl, and there were almost as many misspelled words as there were words in the letter. But to Kate it came as a blessing. In it was all the love and affection the miller could express. And the girl could read much more between the lines.

"Just come back if you don't like it there," he had written, and Kate smiled in appreciation.

Frequently Kate had wondered about the outcome of the sale of her household goods. Now Mr. Thompson ended what hopes she might have had. The total of the sales was thirty-eight dollars and forty cents. What a paltry sum, Kate thought. If she could only have kept the furniture, she would have been happy.

"The lawyer came out again," Mr. Thompson wrote, "but it looks like he's going to give up the case because we can't pay him any fees."

Kate sat down immediately and answered this letter. She did not tell of all the heart-aches and tears that her new home had brought, nor the many nights when her pillow was wet with tears before she went to sleep, nor of the horrid scoldings she received almost daily. No, she must not worry Mr. Thompson. She must tell him of the pretty dresses her aunt had bought her, the cunning little shiny slippers that she could almost use for a mirror, and the close-fitting tan hat that just matched her linen dress and made her look almost as grown-up as Nell Blakely's oldest sister.

Occasionally, the girl could make herself believe that things were going well, but the scene would usually wind up in tears. Many times after Uncle Jasper had been exceptionally cruel in his scoldings, the girl would fly up to her room and spend her fury on the four walls. She would hurl pillows in divers directions, stamp her feet and fume at imaginary figures, but the fury would last for only a short time, and afterwards there would be the flood of tears.

Uncle Jasper, it seemed, was becoming more irritable daily. He seemed to resent her presence and tried in every way possible to make her feel it without actually ordering her away.

"I don't think Uncle Jasper likes to have me here," she said one morning to her Aunt Agnes. "I think he wants me to go away."

"Now, don't think anything of the kind," her aunt replied kindly, putting her arm about the girl. "That's just his natural way, and you must learn to overlook it."

"But I think he actually hates me!" the girl exclaimed.

"Why, Kate, how ridiculous!" Aunt Agnes said, laughing nervously. "No, it isn't that. He has many business cares, and he can never get his mind off them long enough to think of anything else. That's what makes him act as he does."

That evening Uncle Jasper 'phoned that he would not be home for dinner; he had to keep a business appointment. It was the girl's first dinner alone with her aunt, and she enjoyed it thoroughly. Mrs. Dowling seemed unusually kind. After the meal they sat in the lawn swing in the back yard and talked far into the evening.

Just about the time they were thinking of going to bed, the screen door slammed and Uncle Jasper came hurrying down the steps. The moon shining through the oak trees threw speckled shadows over his face, fortunately hiding his expression. He came within a few feet of the swing and stood there glaring at Kate, who sat facing him. After a few seconds, his wife, sensing trouble in the

unusual procedure, turned and looked at him.

"I didn't know you'd be home this early, Jasper," she observed. "We were just thinking of going to bed."

Uncle Jasper was in no mood for civility. He continued to glare at Kate, utterly disregarding his wife's greeting. After another few seconds had elapsed, he shook his head up and down in a calculating manner.

"So you've done it, have you?" he demanded in his gruff, unreasoning tone. His words sounded mysterious to the girl, but his tone held no uncertainty. It seemed intended for ears heavily laden with guilt.

Kate Martin looked at him with fright in her eyes. But mixed with the fright was indignation. What could he mean? How could he have found out about her having been back of the heavy window curtains that night and unintentionally listening to part of his conversation? He certainly could not know of it, because no one else knew! But what else could he mean? What else could she possibly have done to displease him in such a serious manner?

"Well, what have you got to say for yourself?" he bellowed, after waiting for the girl to answer.

"I don't know what you're talking about," she finally said. "I didn't do anything." Her answer



rang simple and sincere, but the irate man only grew more wrathful.

"Don't know what I'm talking about!" he exclaimed in mockery. "No, you don't."

"Why, Jasper, what does this all mean?" Mrs. Dowling asked in an appealing tone. "What are you accusing the child of?"

He grew more furious as he talked, and the interruption by his wife only seemed to anger him the more. With complete disregard for her question and an impatient toss of his head he continued scolding Kate.

"I told you if you needed money to go and ask your Aunt Agnes. Why didn't you do it? Instead, this is what I find." At this point he pulled from his pocket an empty bankbill folder, ends flapping loose.

"Why, Uncle Jasper!" Kate exclaimed, astounded beyond expression.

"Don't give me any of that innocence stuff. I'm tired of it. When your aunt is gone you go snooping around her room. When I'm gone, you do the same."

"I wish you'd be more reas——" began Mrs. Dowling.

So great was his fury that he refused any mediation by his wife. With a side swing of his hand, he silenced her.

"There were three dollars in my pocketbook. That's appreciation! Bah!"

"I didn't do it! I didn't do it! I wouldn't think of taking anybody's money!" wailed Kate.

"You wouldn't! Well, then, why did you take mine?"

"I didn't take yours!" Kate hurled back. "I didn't! I didn't."

Only the slowly forming anger of weeks could have given the girl courage to outtalk the man. He tried to silence her after the first denial, but she went on and on repeating her declaration of innocence. When she finished, she jumped out the other side of the swing and ran around the house to the front.

She walked down the street as fast as her feet would move, eyes blazing and face reddened with anger. Her face felt terribly hot, and her neck and ears. She almost fell over a little poodle who wobbled in her path, but she jumped over him and went on.

"I hate him! I hate him!" was the only intelligible phrase that came to her. "He's the meanest thing that ever lived! I'll never go back again—not as long as I live!"

She had started out toward the country, and now she found herself walking alone on the road.

"Want a ride?" a voice called, as a roadster slowed up by her side.

"No!" she shouted.

Suddenly she felt afraid. Perhaps she had better turn back. Where could she go? What was there to do about it?

"I'll never stay there again. The horrid old thing! Saying I took his money! I loathe him!"

She went back toward the house. She went into the yard, but walked past the house. Before reaching the end of the lawn, a soft voice called her name.

"Oh, Kate, come back, dear."

The girl turned around to see her aunt's form coming around the house. She held out one hand beseechingly in the moonlight, and Kate without a moment's hesitation ran toward her.

"I didn't know what you'd do, you're so impulsive," her aunt said kindly. "You mustn't mind what he says, dear. You're too sensitive, far too sensitive."

"But, Aunt Agnes, I can't stand it to let him call me a thief! That's what he did. Oh, I couldn't bear it another minute. I must go away—I must."

"I don't want you to leave, Kate. I want you to stay with me."

At this moment Uncle Jasper walked around the house, and without looking at either of them, he entered it and slammed the screen door after him.

At first sight of him Aunt Agnes stopped talking and motioned to the girl to follow him in. Silently they went to their rooms, the girl and her aunt with heavy hearts, and the man with his cold, intolerant arrogance.

Kneeling before the window, the girl tried to think. What could she do? There was only one thing, and that was to run away. She must get away and find some place to stay. That part did not matter much, just so she was away from that unspeakable man she called uncle.

Vague thoughts wafted through her mind. There was something about Arabs. Finally, the thought became clearer. "Like Arabs fold their tents and softly steal away by night." Yes, it went something like that. And that's what she must do. She must steal away, but not by night. She would be afraid, afraid of the dark, afraid of the loneliness, afraid of the night. But she would steal away. Yes, she would go that very next day.

## CHAPTER XI

### MR. PEAWEE LENDS A HAND

THE next morning, after an almost sleepless night, Kate Martin awoke early, dressed herself hastily, and walked quietly down the front stairs. She looked about the house at the luxurious furnishings, the spacious rooms, at the elegant tapestry in the hall.

She must leave it. She simply must.

She opened the front door quietly and walked out into the early morning sunlight. There were only long shadows from the trees now; long, thin, dark streaks over the lawns and the sidewalk from the rising sun which was just peeping high enough to throw its rays against the tops of the houses. The trees and buildings obstructed the view, but the golden disc was evidently only venturing over the edge of the world.

"It's funny how the sun does," Kate mused. "It looks as if it wants to wake people up as quickly as it can, and it somehow knows that they sleep upstairs. I suppose that's why it hits the tops of houses first. Gee, that's funny!"

The girl walked on, delighting in the warm air, forgetting, for the time, her heavy heart.

"And it makes the shadows of trees so long and skinny," Kate's thoughts raced on, "just as though they were all flattened out against the ground; as though they'd all lain down at night to go to sleep and hadn't got up yet."

Soon she heard the milkman come rattling down the street. His horse knew just when to go and when to stop without a word. And when he would deliver to several houses in a row without returning to the wagon, he would merely whistle and the horse would jog along to be waiting for him when he came.

She had seen the milkman several other mornings when she had arisen early. He was young, with a tanned, ruddy face. Aunt Agnes had told her that he was helping earn his way through college by having a milk route during the summer and most of the winter.

The enthusiasm and energy which the boy showed were catching. Kate no longer walked along aimlessly. There seemed to be more purpose in things now, more hope. Unconsciously, she adopted some of the cheeriness the boy carried.

Walking along now with head in the air and with a firm, long stride, she kept to the avenue in the direction of town. Pretty soon she would



be in the uptown business section. But probably nothing would be open.

"I guess nobody but the milkman gets up this early," she thought. But she soon saw a number of workmen with their lunch boxes passing over the cross streets.

"Oh, I must go over and watch them put out that fire," she decided, seeing a number of firemen at work in and around a small business building near the library. She sat on a grassy terrace facing them, and, for some time, became absorbed in watching the men run hither and thither fighting what was evidently only a small blaze.

But after a while she leaned over on her elbow and began to think. She did not care if they fought that fire all day. Nor did she care if the milkman delivered milk for twenty-eight hours in the day, or if he broke all the bottles, or if his horse ran into a lamp-post, or if the boy came out and the horse had gone on to the next block. She did not care about anything!

"I wish I knew what I could do," she thought anxiously. She pulled whole handfuls of grass out of the terrace and threw them petulantly into the air. "But I guess I oughtn't to take it out on the grass," she decided, and patted down the rough edges of soil where she had plucked the grass.

"I can't stay at Uncle Jasper's any longer! I

hate it! I hate it!" After repeating any fact, it seems doubly true, and Kate Martin had a habit of stating fancies over several times until she became thoroughly convinced of their authenticity.

"When I went to bed last night, I felt as if I couldn't stay in that old house for a whole night! Well, I'm not going to stay another day!"

Kate fancied a whole series of dramatic things that could happen. She could run away, get on a train and ride until her money ran out, and then simply get off in some town and see what would happen. She would get along somehow. But that plan did not seem feasible.

What she could do was go back to Rockdale and stay with Mr. Thompson again. No, that would never do! That night under the stars, her last night in Rockdale, she had made the firm resolve that she would not burden her friend, the miller, by staying with him. That was not the honorable thing to do; so, of course, she would never do it. As though he did not have a hard enough time taking care of himself and Molly without worrying about a third person!

Suddenly a smile of inspiration spread over Kate's face, and her blue eyes shone brightly.

"I know what I'll do!" she exclaimed, jumping up and skipping over the grass toward the walk. "I'll go to Conningsburg. Yes, I'll go to Conningsburg and get a job there. That's just the

thing! And maybe I'll see Frank, because he works there. But, of course, that isn't why I'm going," she thought, by way of justification. "It's near, and it's big enough for me to find a job in, anyhow."

Carried along now by the bouyancy due to her decision, she walked on toward town.

"Oh, I know," she decided. "I'll get Mr. Peawee to take my suitcase to the station, and then nobody'll suspect my going. Oh, what a splendid idea! I wonder why I didn't think of it before!"

Sometimes when she had ordered the meat or when Mr. Peawee had delivered the order at the back door, Kate had talked with him. His little wizened form and twinkling blue eyes inspired confidence. He was just the opposite of Uncle Jasper in every respect, and that very thing made the girl like him the more. She had decided she would never again like any one who looked like Uncle Jasper, or talked like him, or acted like him!

So now Kate turned her steps toward Mr. Peawee's meat shop. When she came within sight of the building, her heart sank as the realization flooded over her of how friendless she was in this city when she must turn to a tradesman she knew but slightly for help in her trouble.

To stifle this feeling, she broke into a run and

burst somewhat noisily into the shop, banging the screen door behind her.

"You here so early?" the man greeted her. Kate looked at the large clock on the wall and was surprised to see that it was just half past six.

She told him her story and in finishing, said:

"Now don't tell me I shouldn't run away, Mr. Peawee, because I've got my mind all made up. Just tell me how I can do it."

The old gentleman scratched his head and seemed to be thinking hard. Then he scratched it with his other hand and seemed to be concentrating still harder. Suddenly Kate solved the problem for both of them.

"I've got it!" she said. "I'll go back now and pack and have my suitcase on the back porch when you come with your order. Then will you take it on your wagon with you?"

"No, Katie! I shouldn't do that. Your aunt would stop all her orders if she ever saw me."

"But she won't see you, Mr. Peawee! She told me the other day that this morning she had an appointment with the dentist and that it would take the whole morning by the time she had everything done. You see, she can't possibly be there. You'll do it for me, won't you, Mr. Peawee? I don't know what I'll do if you don't!"

As the meat dealer looked at the girl he could not resist the wistful blue eyes.

"Sure, I'll do it," he promised, completely ignoring the danger to his future orders.

"But what will you do with it?" Kate asked. She was not accustomed to such emergencies and did not think far ahead. "Oh, I know! You leave it at the bus station, and I'll walk down there and go to Conningsburg. I would never, never stay in this town. Uncle Jasper would like as not find me and drag me through the whole town by my ear."

She laughed heartily at the prospect of being exhibited in such an ungraceful position and could almost picture herself squirming under his touch.

The girl rushed home, glorying in the excitement but fearful lest she could not get her clothes packed in time for the meat delivery.

"How I hate to leave all my pretty new clothes," she sighed. "I wonder if it would hurt," she mused, eager for an excuse to justify herself. "No, I won't take a thing along that was bought with his horrid old money—not one thing! Not if I have to go barefooted!"

After this determination she realized that she could easily have carried the suitcase herself.

"But it's better this way," she decided. "Then Sam or Nancy or nobody will see me going away with it. Maybe they would have kept me from going.

"Goodness, but I look different, dressed in my

old things. I didn't know they made such a difference as all that."

The temptation to confiscate at least one of the dresses and perhaps the patent-leather slippers almost overcame her, and as she looked at them longingly she came very near yielding.

"No, I won't—I won't—I won't!" she exclaimed, stamping her foot. "Then he could accuse me of stealing the clothes as he did about the money. As though I'd even look in his old bill folder!"

Kate lowered her suitcase from the back window with a rope, lest in going down the stairs she might meet Nancy. Then she ventured down and set it to one side, covering it with a paper. Soon she heard Mr. Peawee's wagon rolling along the front.

Kate ran out and received the bundle of meat, and Mr. Peawee departed with the suitcase, each happy in his own mission.

"Going to have some lamb chops for lunch, Fanny?" asked Kate of the cook, as she watched Fanny unwrap the meat.

"Yes. Do you like them?" Fanny asked.

"Well, yes; but I don't think I'll care for many this noon." Kate thought she had better be off before she committed herself too much.

After running upstairs for her coat and hat she disappeared through the front door. The bus



terminal was about a mile away, and she walked briskly through town, eager to be off.

Her suitcase was awaiting her there, and she found that the next bus for Conningsburg would leave in half an hour.

Half an hour! What a long time to wait when one was anxious to be up and doing. Why didn't they run their old buses oftener? Maybe there was another bus line that would have a bus going sooner.

But there was no other line and Kate had to content herself with waiting. She kept a bit out of sight, too, thinking that possibly her Uncle Jasper might come along and see her and drag her back.

"But if he comes I won't go," she told herself firmly. "I just won't go, so there!"

Looking around at the faces in the station, she saw many to interest her. There was a small boy devouring peanuts so fast that several times he almost choked on the shell. A young father holding an infant had to keep continual watch lest the child put its finger in his father's eye. The uncertain little hand would be raised in the general direction of the eye, and in wobbly fashion would set out for its goal in uncanny certainty.

In the corner was a small old lady reading a book. Frequently a smile would play over the kindly features and the gray eyes would twinkle.

Kate wanted to see what book the woman was reading and finally found that it was "The Haunted Book Room." The reader was so intent with interest that not until the driver had called several times did she arise and walk out to the bus.

Kate had been the next to the last of the crowd to leave the waiting room, and it happened that the old lady and Kate sat together, their seat being the last one in the bus. A very stout woman came puffing up a few minutes later, but the driver called, "All seats taken, madam," so she expressed her dismay with a long face and backed to the curb. Kate had a great mind to offer her seat to the woman and wait for the next bus. But with this thought came that of the possibility of being found by Uncle Jasper, so she kept her seat.

At the next town the kindly old lady who had been her seat mate arose to leave, and again she was so engrossed in her book that she did not reach the door of the bus until it was almost ready to start. Kate watched her cross the street and enter a drugstore on the corner, then her eyes wandered over the passengers in the bus.

As her hand fell to one side, her fingers came in contact with something cold. It must be metal, and not the leather of the seat. She looked down and saw a brown purse with a silver edge. How wonderful! Just when she needed it most!

Then her eyes widened as the second thought

flashed through her mind. It must be the old lady's who had sat with her! Of course it was! She rang the bell and struggled through the narrow aisle to the front.

"I must get off," she said. "Please let me off now. I've found the purse that belongs to a lady who got off back there."

"She'll come to the office for it," the driver said, unperturbed by the girl's anxiety.

"Oh, but she might need it!" the girl pleaded. "Please—I'll walk back from here."

The driver applied the brakes slowly and drew up to the curb.

"Guess we have to please the women," he said good-naturedly.

## CHAPTER XII

### A CHARMING OLD LADY

THE bus was now almost two blocks away from the stopping place at which the old lady had alighted, and, as Kate Martin looked ahead, she could see people weaving in and out through the stream of pedestrians on the sidewalk.

"I must see if she comes out of the drugstore before I get there," Kate thought. "I'll bet she's found out by this time that it's gone because she must have gone in to buy something."

As the girl rushed into the store heedless of consequences, she ran square into another girl of her own age. The offended purchaser looked frigidly at Kate; in fact, she scowled at her. But Kate smiled apologetically and said:

"Oh, did I hurt you? I'm so sorry!"

The apology sounded so sincere that the girl's expression melted. No, she was not hurt at all.

Once in the store Kate spied the little lady standing at the prescription counter talking with a clerk. Evidently she was inquiring for something which they would have to order.

Kate walked over and stood waiting at one side until she should finish her conversation.

"You'll be sure and send it to me as soon as it comes in?" the old lady asked kindly.

Assured of their immediate mailing of the package, she turned to leave the counter. Kate touched her arm.

"Pardon me," the girl said. "I think you must have left this in the bus."

The old lady turned suddenly and looked first at the purse and then at Kate.

"Well, it *is* mine, isn't it?" she said with deep surprise, as though she had expected that some mistake had been made. "Why, my dear, I'm so glad to get it back! It was lovely of you to bring it. How did you know it was mine?"

"You were sitting in the seat with me. I didn't know it until after you got off."

"But the bus started as soon as I got off!" the old lady said, still mystified by the whole matter. "Do you mean that you got off and ran back? Why, that's what you must have done. I can't tell you how glad I am. I want you to take something," she added, opening the purse and feeling in it.

"Oh, no!" Kate exclaimed, drawing back. "I was just glad to have you get it back again. I thought you might need it while you were shopping."

"Yes, I certainly would have needed it. Stupid of me not to notice it, but I was so engrossed in that book. It's so interesting. You know, when I'm reading something that fascinates me I simply forget everything else. Why, I would have forgotten I was on the bus if the driver hadn't called out this stop so loud. I usually stop off here, and when the driver saw that I wasn't getting off, he called out to remind me. He knows how absent-minded I am."

As Kate listened and saw the wrinkles run up and down the kindly face and watched the smile flash over the small features, she felt that she had never met such a charming old lady.

"Yes, I saw you reading the book in the station," Kate observed.

As they walked out of the store the owner of the purse again opened it.

"Now, my dear, I want you to take a little token of appreciation," the old lady insisted, this time looking serious. "It's no more than right," she added. Again Kate refused.

"Why, I wouldn't want you to give me anything," she said. "I was glad to do it."

Then a knowing smile came into the wrinkly blue eyes which Kate thought denoted mischief. But her words were perfectly serious when she spoke.

"Well, here's my card," she said. "Can you



pronounce the name?" she asked. "I'm Mrs. Lucinda Treadwell from Conningsburg. That must have been where you were going," she added. "I think the bus goes no farther."

"Yes, that's where I am going," the girl said. "My name is Kate Martin, and I think I'm going to like it in Conningsburg."

"How nice!" I'm sure you'll like it," Mrs. Treadwell replied. "I want you to come and see me there—will you?"

"I would just love to," Kate answered, with a smile.

At that moment another bus with a Conningsburg sign stopped at the curb, and Mrs. Treadwell motioned to the driver to wait.

"This is your bus, dear. This is the last one until evening, so I suppose you'll want to take it. Now don't forget! Come to see me."

As Kate settled in her seat and looked out the window, Mrs. Treadwell was walking slowly along parallel with the bus, with her head turned toward it. She smiled and waved at Kate as the bus passed, and Kate slid down farther in her seat with a happy smile.

"I wonder if angels grow old?" the girl mused. "If they do, I think Mrs. Treadwell must be just like one. Oh, she's most marvelous! But I wonder what she meant when she smiled so strangely about the reward."

At this moment the bus stopped and the driver walked back through the aisle to collect fares. Kate reached down into her pocket for her fare. She drew out the dime and handed it to the collector. At the same time she saw something fall to the floor.

The driver picked it up and handed it to her. It was a dollar bill, folded.

"Why, did that come out of my pocket?" she exclaimed, surprised.

"Yep," he said, moving to the next passenger. "Sure did."

Kate gasped in astonishment.

"Where on earth—" she began. Then understanding came into her eyes. Why, of course, Mrs. Treadwell had slipped it into her pocket. That was why she had smiled as she had. It must have been later when the bus came along that she had done it.

"That was just like her," Kate thought. "Even though I never saw her before, it seems that I know perfectly well."

They passed fields of corn and wheat, and in them all Kate could read romance. She was no ordinary girl who looked at nature as a thing to be taken for granted. No, indeed! Every little flower, every tiny blade of grass, was a living, almost breathing, thing, and she took joy in imagining nature in the form of persons.

"Sometime I'm going to write a story about brownies who live in cornfields. But no, I couldn't call them brownies until fall and winter, because in the summer when the corn is green, they're green. But it wouldn't do to call them greenies part of the time and brownies the rest of the time. That wouldn't do at all.

"But what I could do is to put them together. No, that would be too long. It would be like a girl being named Anastasia Eloise. Let's see." Leaning her chin on her hand and her elbow on the sill of the car, Kate thought hard. In a few minutes the concentration reaped a harvest. "What a delightful name. I'll call them breenies, or, let's see, maybe I could call them grownies. Why, either one would fit."

After deciding on the name of her new characters, Kate thought it must be time for Conningsburg, and she looked far ahead through the mist of the hills, trying to catch sight of the town. But for a long time only occasional farmhouses answered her searching eyes.

Then the driver called: "Conningsburg." It seemed as though they had suddenly turned a corner and there was the town!

"I must get my things together," Kate thought. She looked at the floor—in front, in the back, in the aisle. There was no suitcase! It had completely disappeared. Hadn't she brought it with

her on the bus? Hadn't she placed it right in front under her feet?

After a few moments of agonized thought, she remembered. Why, of course! She had left it on the other bus, and it had gone on without her. Where would she find it now? What a thoughtless thing to do!

## CHAPTER XIII

### ALONE IN A STRANGE CITY

KATE MARTIN stepped down from the bus and looked up and down the street.

What she expected to see, she had no idea. Everything looked strange. And she felt so desolate, so utterly alone. How different this was from her rosy, adventurous thoughts of the early morning. Under the spell of the rising sun, the whole undertaking seemed different. All the glamour and spirit of the thing had faded away, and all that was left was a weary girl, alone in a strange city, with little money, few clothes, and no knowledge of what to do.

Her suitcase was gone, and, so far as the girl could see, there was little or no chance of getting it back. It contained only a few dresses which she had brought from Rockdale and heavy muslin underclothes that she had laid aside while she was living with the Dowlings.

"Those things don't look just right on you," Aunt Agnes had said in a kindly way. She would not have hurt the girl's feelings, but still

she could not allow her to wear those old-fashioned clothes which she had brought from home.

"Why, I like these better than the newer styles," Kate had answered. "Of course they are sort of worn out." But after the shopping tour when the new dresses had been purchased, the loyalty to her former clothes had faded before the dainty linens and organdies which Aunt Agnes had chosen.

"But they're all gone," Kate thought sadly, as she walked along the street. She had never before felt so utterly helpless. But she had never before struck out for herself. Well, she had done the thing, so she would have to see it through.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't come," she moaned under her breath. "If I was just back in Craigway, I wouldn't care about anything else!"

But a few minutes later she straightened her shoulders.

"What an awful baby I am," she thought. "Here I make up my mind what I ought to do and then do it. And as soon as anything goes wrong, I give up. I won't give up! I just won't!"

For some unexplainable reason this thought seemed the turning point. It shook away the feeling of helplessness that had gripped the girl before. And when that was gone, a renewed interest in things about her was in its place.

"Now if I could only get a job, I wouldn't care



about the old suitcase. There wasn't much in it, anyway." But the verbal denial of worry did not solve the problem, nor did it keep Kate from worrying over the fate of the suitcase. She did need it, and no amount of make-believe would clear that fact from her mind.

The bus had stopped in the busy part of town, and she was now walking along a crowded business street. There were many restaurants, a radio shop, then a stationer's shop.

People were out to lunch, and they all seemed to be hurrying in a dozen directions. Several times, when looking back at the window of some shop, she bumped into some one. Once she caught herself just in time to dodge running into a burly workman, but, as a result of this maneuvering, she knocked down a small messenger boy who had turned about from his bicycle.

"Hey, what you do that fer?" demanded the boy, sprawling over his wheel and then getting up and glaring at Kate.

"Oh, excuse me! I didn't mean to run into you. I—I didn't see you," returned the girl lamely.

"Better look where you're going after this, kid," returned the lad, with a superior air. "If you don't you may drop into a sewer hole."

"I don't think I'll do that," returned Kate

quickly. But the boy with the bicycle was gone and did not hear her.

Her eyes wandered over the masses of people, over the windows, over the vehicles in the street; but nothing seemed to make any impression. Several blocks were passed, and she seemed no nearer the solution of her problem. Then, in a second, things changed.

There was a sign in the window. "*Girl wanted.*" It was a restaurant.

"How grand that I happened to walk down this street!" she thought. "I always have wanted to be a waitress and ask people what they want and what they don't want. And some of them will be cranky and I'll just laugh, and others will be nice and smile even if you do bring them the wrong thing.

"Oh, I had better plan what I'm going to say. I've never thought of that before. I'd better walk by and then come back." But after she had gone on a few steps, a second thought came to her.

"What if somebody else would come along and go in, and I'd be too late for the job? No, I'd better go in right now. I'll walk in just as though I'm going to order a beefsteak dinner."

It was a long, rather narrow place, she found on entering, with shiny, white tables. By the door was the cashier. Kate walked up to the glass cage.

"I—I saw your sign outside," Kate said, with some hesitation.

She did not know if she should go on explaining the situation further, or whether she should allow the woman to talk. She rather thought the proper thing was further explanation, but could not think of anything more to say. Goodness, there was enough she should say! But the words would not come!

"Oh, yes," said the woman, rather pleasantly. She did not smile, but her tone sounded as though she would have done so if she were in the habit of smiling.

"Well, you see that tall man down there in the middle with the white coat on," she explained, pointing in his general direction.

"Oh, I see him," Kate said agreeably. "He's filling the glasses with water."

"No, no, that isn't the one," the woman replied. But before she could explain who was the right one, a customer walked up to the desk to pay his bill. So Kate stepped back and waited for the man to go out.

"Do you mean——" But Kate was not allowed to finish her query, for five more hurried customers pushed their money through the window of the cashier's cage.

"Here he comes now," the cashier said to the waiting girl, as a tall, white-coated man walked up

the aisle. With a crooked finger, she motioned for him to come.

"This girl would like to have the job, Bob. Do you think she'd do?"

The man looked at Kate, but at the end of a second of scrutiny his expression looked negative.

"Too young," he said shortly. "Sorry." But he did not seem sorry at all. Kate thought he seemed very heartless with his abrupt way. She must not give up the thing like that! She walked after him.

"Wouldn't you let me try?" she began. But he turned toward her and shook his head.

"We have a rule against hiring anybody under sixteen," he said. "And you're not sixteen." He said it with such finality that Kate decided more appeal would be fruitless.

"All right," she answered, as she turned to go. She would have liked to tell him it was all wrong, that she knew she could do the work of a sixteen-year-old girl, but she did not. He probably would not have been convinced. So she walked out the door, giving a smile of appreciation to the cashier as she passed.

When she came out on the street, she felt as though she had accomplished something. At least she had made an effort toward self help. Then she began thinking about the bus ride and her suitcase.

"I wonder," she mused, "if that was turned in. I have heard of things being turned in at stations. I'm pretty sure nobody would have walked off with that suitcase. It was too old for anybody to want. I think I'll go back," she decided, turning around.

When she neared the bus station she was feeling quite cheerful again. Perhaps the bus was still waiting there. How stupid that she had not thought of it before.

Several busses were out in front of the terminal, and, after looking around for a few minutes, she spied the man who had driven the bus in which she had left Craigway. He was leaning against the telephone pole, looking no place in particular.

"I think I must have left my suitcase on your bus when I got off at that little station, didn't I?"

"What little station?" he asked.

"Oh, don't you remember? A lady lost her purse and I rushed off to follow her. Don't you know? You stopped for me so I could run back and catch her."

"Oh, yes," he answered, as though he had really known about it all the time. "I put it back of the desk in the waiting room. You can ask the clerk in there."

She forgot to thank him, forgot everything but the suitcase. She dashed into the station, procured the suitcase from the clerk, and was about to walk out when she thought of getting a room.

"I want to find some place to stay," she said, as she again turned to the desk. "Can you tell me of any place?"

"You might go over to Fourth Street," he suggested. "Just walk along Fourth and you'll see a lot of signs of rooms for rent. Of course you'll want one furnished?"

Three blocks away Kate turned to the right as directed and found many old frame houses sadly in need of paint. Most of them displayed signs of furnished rooms, but they looked far from inviting. Except for one or two, the yards certainly had no acquaintance with a lawn mower, Kate thought, and there was no air of cleanliness or cheeriness about them.

On the porch of one place which was set slightly back from the rest, was an elderly woman bending over some sewing. Kate walked up the steps, inquired about the price of rooms, and found that she could obtain one for two dollars a week. She could take her meals in the house or not, just as she chose.

She paid for the first week, left her suitcase in the darkened room, and started down the street. She wanted to be brave, wanted to throw her head in the air and be cheerful about it all, but, somehow, it was all too hard. How could she smile? How could she be courageous?

A group of girls passed by, talking and laugh-



ing, and as Kate glanced up at them she was rather startled. Their lips were a shiny red, cheeks a duller red, and noses and chins white. Besides, they seemed not to have a care in the world. Kate turned and followed them with her eyes. They wore high heels and very pretty cream-colored silk stockings.

She wondered about their faces. She had heard people talk of such extremes, but no one in Rockdale had ever made up like that. They certainly did not look any prettier with so much powder and paint. They just looked glaring.

As she glanced back she saw them turn in at the house where she had rented the room. For some reason she felt afraid. She was not accustomed to being with strange people, people whom she did not know or had never seen before.

Then she began wondering about work. How would she go about it? Where would she apply? If this was only a month or so further on when things had been settled! The uncertainty was too terrible. What if she couldn't find work? What would she do?

She thought of the friendly face at the bus terminal. Undoubtedly the man would know where to go—it seemed as though he knew almost everything—and would be glad to help. So she went.

"So you're looking for a job!" he said, looking at the girl quizzically. "Well, let me see," and

he gazed up at the corner of the ceiling a few minutes as though to derive inspiration from that particular spot. From somewhere in the dark recesses of his desk he pulled a crumpled paper. "This ought to help us," he said, turning to the employment page.

Running his finger down the column he looked over his glasses at the girl.

"What can you do?" he asked kindly.

"Well, I don't know. I guess 'most anything, though," the girl answered.

He smiled at her confidence and again looked down at the page.

"Here they want a girl to pack peanuts. How would you like that?"

"Oh, I simply love them," Kate answered, beaming. "And to think I could work with them all day and put them into sacks. That would be glorious!" Finding a job would not be so hard after all. Here it was the first afternoon and she almost had one. Of course, it was not sure, but then one could always hope for it.

"Where is it? Can I go right away?" she asked in one breath.

"Here," said the fellow, tearing out the item. "You had better take this, and I'll write the directions for finding the place on a sheet of paper for you."

Kate proudly marched out of the bus station.

The uncertain look had changed to a radiant, confident smile, and she walked down the street with a long stride and head in the air. The whole world was brighter now. Even people's faces seemed happier.

"Now I wonder what I should say!" she pondered. "It is always easy to do things after you have done them a number of times, but getting a job for the first time—that is something I had not thought of."

She finally reached the address. It was a large, old, brick building, and over the door at one end it said "Employees' Entrance."

She might as well go in there as hunt for any other entrance. She was not an employee as yet, but she hoped to be. Once inside, she saw a colored elevator man nodding as he sat by the iron grating.

"Where can I go to get a job here?" she asked.

"Does you want a job?" he drawled. "Come right in heah and I'll take you upstai's."

At the second floor he opened the door and Kate saw a large room filled with people working at desks.

"See the man with the light hair and glasses—that's him."

Kate unconsciously gritted her teeth and walked to the side of the desk designated. She stood there a few minutes while the blond man continued

to read the letters before him. After shifting from one foot to another for a time and wondering how long she would have to wait and whether she should address him or not, the gentleman glanced up at her. His eyes did not change expression, and he immediately looked down again and continued to read.

Kate's mind was working fast. She must try to act in a capable and grown-up fashion. She must make him think she could do a lot of work.

At this moment the tortoise-shell rimmed glasses were turned in her direction and she suddenly felt little and insignificant. She felt herself getting smaller and smaller, and farther away.

## CHAPTER XIV

### PACKING PEANUTS

"WELL?"

The blond man uttered the syllable as though he were serving it to Kate Martin on the point of a sword. Or as though it were putty suddenly thrown against a wall and made hard.

The girl blinked several times then opened her mouth to speak.

"Did you come in answer to the ad?" he asked before she got started. Her words seemed strangely far away from her throat and hard to get to.

"A—yes," she said as quickly as the answer would come. If she had eaten a box of crackers her mouth could not have been any drier.

"Think you can do the work?" he asked, in something more like a human tone. He did not seem quite so formidable now. Perhaps he was sorry for the girl in her confusion. "You'll have to fill sacks with peanuts most of the day," he continued. "From time to time there may be other

little odd jobs come up. Ever do any work before?"

"Well, no—just at home," Kate answered. She thought the addition might hold some weight. But when it came out, it sounded weak and unconvincing.

"You can try it to-morrow," he said. "It's nothing much to learn, and if you can't do it, or if it's too hard for you, you won't have to stay."

"To-morrow?" Kate gasped wide-eyed. To think that she already had the job. How easy it was to get it. All you had to do was act naturally, say that you came to get the job, and then the boss would tell you if you could have it or not. What a simple thing! And what a mountain she had made of it!

"Hours from eight to five," she heard him say, as he again looked down at his papers. "Give your name to the girl at the next desk."

The one sentence, "I've got a job!" seemed to roar through Kate's mind, then echo and come back again. "I've got a job—a job!"

Going down in the elevator and out into the street, a wide smile spread over her face. Even the curious glances from passersby had no effect on her. The smile stayed. And instead of fading away, it became more intense. She felt as though she could hardly wait through the night until the next morning came. The urge to get



started, to see what it was like, was maddening. But all there was to do was to wait. She must wait.

As she passed a signboard in a vacant lot, the large figures seemed to bring some significance. Money! To be sure! Salary! She would soon be earning a salary! Wages, they would call it!

Then her pace slackened. Why, she hadn't even asked how much she would get. How queer! And he hadn't mentioned it.

She got out the clipping from the paper. There it was—"Wanted, girl to pack peanuts, \$6.50. Tasty Peanut Company."

That afternoon and evening seemed to stay on forever, simply to tease the girl. At six she went to a small cafeteria for dinner and then for the first time realized that she had had nothing since breakfast. But in all the excitement, one could not think of food.

She wondered if Aunt Agnes and Uncle Jasper had missed her by this time, and what they thought. For a minute she felt sorry about her aunt. She would like to have told her about leaving, but that would never have done. It seemed that Uncle Jasper had frightened his wife into obeying his least whim.

That night, as she climbed the steps to her dingy room, she was too happy to see the worn stair carpet, the steps which needed dusting, and

the dilapidated furniture. She stood before the cracked washbasin and worn-off mirror and scrubbed her face till it shone. And despite the high temperature of the room she slept soundly through the night.

The next morning the sunlight came peeping over the window ledge, slowly crawling in and around the room. As Kate awoke amid the brightness, she was frightened lest she might be late. She must be at work at eight, and she must be there on time. This was more important than school or anything else.

As she hurried down the dingy stairs she looked down at the worn carpet. After the deep, heavy stair treads at the Dowling home, this new place indeed suffered by comparison. Things were not immaculate, either, as they had been in her own home and as she had found them in Craigway. But there was little time to look about.

She crossed the threshold of the dining room and stopped. It seemed that about a dozen pairs of strange eyes were turned toward her. That's all she was conscious of—strange eyes. Eyes that seemed to say: "Who are you? Where on earth are you from?" But after the first shock of the new faces, she walked on and slipped into the nearest chair.

At that minute Mrs. Fletcher entered the room with a tray of steaming coffee.

"Ah! We're adding to our early birds," she said pleasantly. "I want all of you to meet Kate Martin. She just came to stay with us yesterday. Now you must all get to know her."

By this time Mrs. Fletcher had deposited the last cup of coffee at the end of the table and had left the room. The bacon had been passed to the girl, and she was losing no time eating her breakfast, lest she arrive late at the factory.

But it was by no means a comfortable breakfast. Once or twice, as she glanced across the table to smile at some humorous remark one or another of the girls had made, she felt embarrassed; for there was no answering smile. They did not include her in the conversation.

The dark girl with flashing black eyes seemed the chief speaker. She sat directly across the table, but despite this fact, she would never look at Kate. She was addressing her remarks solely to her friends about her.

"And do you know what I told that fellah?" she said. "Well, I just told him where he could go. Me work overtime? Well, I guess not! I jes' said, 'I'm supposed to work till five-thirty, and that's all I work—see?' "

There seemed a general agreement that the brunette had the right philosophy, and before long, similar stories had been added.

Kate was furious at them, and once looked

across and frowned savagely, but they simply laughed, and in order not to be made more uncomfortable, she busied herself about her coffee. It was getting dangerously near eight and Kate hurried out the door to her new job.

An older girl took Kate to the third floor, gave her an apron, and showed her how to measure the peanuts to fill the bags. It all seemed so simple. You just put the contents of one wooden tumbler into the bag, then folded the top a certain way.

And the nuts were deliciously fresh—and salted. Frequently Kate tasted them as she worked. She had always liked salted peanuts, and these were especially good.

Through the morning she packed them, and by noon had the system down so that there was scarcely a wasted motion. A few of the girls asked her to go to lunch with them, but she declined, for she did not feel hungry. So she walked around town during the lunch hour.

The afternoon was a repetition of the morning, until about four o'clock, when Kate began to have a headache. It grew worse and worse, and by five when she went home her stomach felt queer. Since she felt she could not bear to eat dinner that evening, she went to her room to lie down.

It was a long time before she could go to sleep and then she had horrible dreams. A huge giant

was feeding her with his big, clawlike hand and forcing things down her throat. At regular intervals he pried open her mouth and pushed the food down. Then she became faint, but he continued to feed her.

After a fitful slumber she would awaken with a start and look around to see if the giant were near by. The next morning the headache was still pulling her head in all directions and she felt even sicker than the night before.

She dressed and went down to breakfast, but at the sight of her pale face, Mrs. Fletcher, from whom Kate had rented the room, insisted that she go to bed. "I'll bring you some medicine. Don't dare try going to work. You'd never get there."

## CHAPTER XV

### JOB HUNTING AGAIN

Two days later Kate Martin sat by the desk of the blond employer waiting for him to arrive. It was with much apprehension and not a little trembling that she sat there, outwardly calm. After one day of work, she had taken a two-days' vacation. And who was there to tell how very sick the girl had been? Mrs. Fletcher had telephoned; but there was nothing reassuring about a telephone call.

Finally the man with the tortoise-shell rimmed glasses stepped out of the elevator, placed his hat on a hook, and walked to his desk. As he gave Kate a side glance, she arose.

"What happened to you?" he asked in a matter-of-fact tone.

"I had a bad fever and couldn't be out of bed," Kate answered.

"Too bad," he said. "As a rule we don't hire such young girls on that account—they usually eat too many peanuts. It would make anybody sick to eat peanuts all day." He looked at her



with a half smile as though tolerant of the excesses of youth, and sorry too.

"We had to hire somebody else yesterday," he added.

"Then I can't come back? You mean I can't come back?"

The girl's sincerity evidently affected him. He thought for a minute, then said in a still milder tone of voice:

"Did you finish the eighth grade?"

"Oh, yes! I've had the freshman year in the high school!"

"Well," he said, "I think you'd be better off with an office job. I'll tell you what you can do. There's an employment agency just two blocks down on this street. Go down and see what they have."

A short time later Kate Martin walked into a bright-looking office. There were many girls and a few men sitting around, all seemingly waiting. The girl's hopes left her immediately. If all these people were waiting for positions, surely she would have little chance. Especially since most of them were older than she. No doubt they would have the preference. But something inside whispered:

"Push on. Never give up. It's only when you yourself give up that you are beaten."

One of her teachers in Rockdale had instilled this idea into her mind, and now it seemed to stand

before her in bold letters as if it had been written on the blackboard.

After asking the girl at the switchboard whom she could see and having written her name on a card, she was told to sit down and wait. Kate looked about at the faces. Could it be that all these people were looking for work? She had thought it was very seldom that anybody was out of a job.

It was not a great while before she was called into the inner office. There she found an elderly woman with a striped blouse looking very business-like.

"What are you prepared to do?" she asked, taking the situation in hand without waste of time. "Have you had any stenography?"

"No," she replied. "But I finished the first year high," she added hopefully.

The woman tapped the shiny mahogany desk with her pencil and seemed in deep thought. After a few minutes, she looked at Kate with a sharp glance and asked:

"How would you like work in a confectionery store? Have you ever done any selling?"

"Well, no, I haven't," Kate replied. "But I think I could."

The woman turned to a box of index cards and efficiently fingered them over, pulling out one of

the cards. Then she wrote something on another card.

"Take this along with you," she said, handing Kate the card with the name of the agency, "and let me know if you get it or not."

"Oh, thanks so much," Kate said, with deep appreciation. "I was afraid when I saw all these people I wouldn't be able to get anything at all."

"You did? Well, it's according to what kind of place you want and what there is a demand for."

"Oh, I see," Kate said. But she did not see at all. She did not know why there would not be a lot of people who wanted to work in a confectionery store. She had always wanted to sell things to people, and now there would be a chance. She proudly marched through the outer office, glancing neither to right nor to left.

As she walked down the street in the direction of the address, a thousand questions came into her mind. What kind of people would she work for? Would they be cranky? Would she be capable of doing the work? Would it be hard to learn? Would the hours be very long?

After a comparatively short walk she reached the neighborhood of the confectionery store; at least the numbers indicated that it was not far away. After a jump of from three to four hundred in the numbering, as cities have a way of doing, she found herself before a small store.

She stopped a minute to look in the window. It was anything but attractive. There were tops and rubber balls and pencils, arranged in a rather messy way, and to the side were a few tablets of paper on which was the accumulation of the dust of days. The candy displayed was uninviting.

"I'll bet I wouldn't let it be that way long," Kate decided. "Why, I could make a cute looking window out of that." She visualized a pink and blue color scheme of fresh crêpe paper to take the place of that which the sun had faded. The window on the other side of the entrance, too, was a rather aimless conglomeration of nothing in particular. Kate glowed over the reform she would bring about.

"Why, anybody could fix them better than that," she decided. "I'd better go in before I get scared. I always do get scared when I think things over. It's much better to jump right in and not think about it at all. I know if I'd thought very long about running away and coming here, I'd never have done it. I'd have thought of all sorts of dangers. And I suppose if I had asked anybody, they'd have told me it was a wicked thing."

With these thoughts, she crossed the threshold of the store. There was no one about, but as the screen door closed, a tiny bell rang. A few minutes elapsed in which she could look about the store.

The room was square, and larger than it appeared from the outside. A glass counter against the far side was filled with candy in dishes, and boxes of cakes, while the counter along the left wall held cigars and cigarettes. Just as Kate was turning around to view the whole place, she heard footsteps coming from the inner room.

Kate looked up to see a small, shriveled, dark man with a black mustache and beard. The mouse-like black eyes looked suspicious by nature, as though they suspected the whole world of wrongdoing.

"What do you want?" he asked, without expression.

"The agency sent me up here," Kate said.

"What?" he asked abruptly, almost before Kate had opportunity to finish her statement.

"The employment agency sent me up," Kate repeated. "They said you wanted a girl to wait on the customers."

"Who said I wanted a girl? Who said so?" he demanded. He would probably have choked the culprit if that were possible.

Kate had no idea of what to do or say. Perhaps there was some mistake; she might have gotten the wrong address. She pulled the card from her pocket and compared the numbers with those on the transom. Yes, it was the right

place, number one hundred and seventeen Minot Street.

All this time the little dark man was walking up and down at a furious rate, and Kate thought he must be mad. The idea of sending for a girl to work and then denying it. He certainly must be mad.

"Well, maybe it's a mistake," Kate said. "Maybe they got the wrong place."

She felt she wanted to escape before he threw something at her. He seemed so furious, pacing there back and forth, back and forth, that he was likely to do anything. His little eyes were jumping around as though they were on rubber bands and might pop out at any time.

"Wrong place! I guess so!" he muttered vehemently, as the girl turned to go.

As Kate faced the door, her entrance was blocked by a large woman who stood there. Evidently she had been waiting for a few minutes. She, too, was dark and swarthy, but there was some quality in the eyes that denoted fire. They flashed determination. She looked from the girl to the man, and her eyes narrowed.

"Are you going to get somebody, or aren't you?" she asked, with great deliberation.

"We can get along. We can get along," he said doggedly. "We don't need anybody else."



Kate, mystified, looked from one to the other. What could it all mean?

"I tell you I'm not going to let Violet kill herself in here working all hours and trying to keep up school at the same time. She did it last year and that was enough. And you know what a rush we have around school time."

"We can't afford anybody else, I tell you," he said, with more spirit. "It's not that I wouldn't if I could."

"Can't afford it," she sneered. "No, you'd rather kill yourself and your family for a few dollars."

Evidently the man was accustomed to such words of scorn, for they had little effect on him. He merely shook his head and continued to walk back and forth.

After a short time of silence, Kate moved toward the door.

"Maybe I'd better go," she said.

The woman stepped aside and for a fleeting second a smile came over her face.

"I hope you didn't have very far to come," she said.

"Oh, no," Kate said. "It wasn't far." She felt she wanted to get away from this family squabble. Even if the man would give in and allow a clerk, she would never want to work

there. It would be even worse than being around Uncle Jasper. And that was bad enough!

It was not long before she had returned to the employment agency and told the story to the woman in the office.

"Well, that's peculiar," the woman said. "I suppose it was his wife who called up yesterday and asked us to send some one down. They're funny people," she added. "I believe they've done that before, too." The woman again fingered through a box of index cards on her desk.

"Did the National put through the filing job this morning?" she asked a girl assistant. "Go and ask Miss Meyer about that."

The assistant left the room and in a minute returned with a card.

"It just came," she said.

"There's an opening for a file girl at seven dollars a week. It will be a good chance for you to learn something about clerical work. It's a large insurance company. Do you want to try it?"

Kate lost no time in expressing her delight, and after filling out a card she was again on her way. So she was going to work in an office! That would be much better, anyhow, than a factory. It sounded much nicer when any one asked where you worked.

The National Insurance Company she found to be on the first floor of a large building. It was

clean and white and airy looking, and Kate thought she would enjoy working in it just from its appearance.

The process of being hired had little formality and in a short time a girl not many years older than herself was explaining the work. The letters from the different offices came through the file desk and one large file system was used for all. Each file had a subject and a number and the drawers were arranged numerically. The file clerk had to become sufficiently familiar with the files so that when any one asked for a certain claim or special file she would know where to look for it.

Before very long Kate Martin found that it was much harder than packing peanuts, and far more exacting. But there was a great deal of fun in it, too. Here she was doing something real. She was holding down a real job in the business world, and it was not mechanical at all. It required thinking, and memory, too.

At first the numbers all ran before her eyes without rule or reason. They conspired to confuse her, and by ten o'clock her head was swimming with figures. They were going in all directions. As for classification—that seemed impossible!

Something happened to encourage her, however. While she was working over the claims in the second drawer, the older girl was called away. The 'phone rang and a voice asked that Claim

be brought in as quickly as possible. Shortly before, Kate had been working at the 92100 box, and she remembered that it was far in the corner. Now she proudly walked back, extracted the claim, and brought it to the front office.

"Pretty quick work," was the greeting.

Kate walked from the office happy. She was learning the job and giving service. She was actually doing something worth while. As a part of a big successful organization, she was helping to make it successful.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CUTTING DOWN

BEFORE Kate Martin thought it possible, twelve o'clock came, and, with it, lunch time.

"The drug store at the corner has good sandwiches," the older girl said. "And they're only a dime."

After waiting three deep, Kate finally got her place at the counter and ordered lunch. After the two days in bed, food tasted especially good, and, too, after a morning of such strenuous work.

Suddenly, just after she had taken a few bites of her tomato sandwich, two cool hands closed over her eyes from the back.

"Guess who it is," said a low voice which was obviously disguised.

"I don't know. You must think I'm somebody else," Kate said, feeling that no one here would know her.

"Give you three guesses!" said the voice, disregarding her comment.

Kate's heart beat loudly with excitement but her mind stood still. These few days of loneliness

made her feel as though she never again would see a friend. And now her imagination refused to act.

"Guess!" the voice commanded, the hands tightening their hold.

With one quick motion Kate slipped from under the blinding hands and turned about. There was a dark suit. Then her eyes reached up to the face.

"Frank Coburn!" Kate gasped. "It's—it's not really you, is it?"

"Nobody else!" he exclaimed, grinning.

Kate slid down from the high stool and stood by his side. "How grand to see you!" she exclaimed, almost breathless from delight and surprise.

"Aren't you going to finish your lunch?" he asked, glancing at the corners of sandwich still on the plate.

"Oh, I didn't like it much, anyway, and I couldn't finish it now."

"Let's walk down the street. I want to hear all about what you've been doing," Frank said. "This seems pretty far from old Rockdale, doesn't it?"

Kate told him of her life in Craigway, how it became more and more distasteful as she realized she was being dependent on an uncle whom she despised.

"And, anyhow, I felt I ought to work out things



myself and not be dependent on anybody!" she exclaimed spiritedly.

"That sounds just like the Kate I used to know. I remember you always did want to hold up your end of the bargain, even when you weren't any bigger than a bar of soap and we used to play Fly-Sheep-Fly or I-Spy. You would never let anybody else count for you even before you were big enough to pronounce the numbers."

Kate laughed merrily. Walking along with some one she knew was as good as being the most popular person in the world after a few days alone. Then, it was so unusually fine to see Frank Coburn again!

It was Frank's turn to laugh when she told him of the job packing peanuts, how she had eaten too many and had gone home sick.

"And do you know, Frank, I didn't know until two days later when the man at the desk spoke about it what made me sick. I had forgotten about it, and, anyhow, I didn't realize I was eating so many.

"But tell me about yourself," she demanded. "Here we've been talking all this time about me. And I'll have to get back by one o'clock."

Frank told her of his position with Paris and Wheeler, how he was learning what he could from actual contact with cases during the day, and that

when night school started in the fall, he would take up law there.

"I wanted to go to see you in Craigway," he said; "but it happened that twice, just as I had decided to go up, I was sent out of town. They're sending me around on trips now, but this fall when I attend school three nights a week, there'll be somebody else to go."

"I'll bet you'll be in for some hard work!" Kate said. "It will be a lot harder than high school, won't it?"

"I should say it will!" Frank responded. "You see, the four nights when I'm not at school I'll have to be cramming my head full of knowledge. But it's going to be great!" he added enthusiastically, his eyes gleaming with expectation.

"I think it's wonderful!" Kate exclaimed. "And just think! When you're through and you're a successful lawyer, you can look back and think that you worked for it all yourself and didn't just sit back and let things come to you."

"Becoming a successful lawyer, Kate, will take many years. I've got to study hard and for a long time; and then, after I pass my examinations, I've got to watch my chance. You must remember the woods are full of lawyers, good, bad and so-so, and a fellow has to work hard to make the grade."

"You'll make it, Frank. I'm sure of it," said

Kate, with conviction. "One of these days you'll be the biggest lawyer in the state."

"Humph! sounds good, anyway," and his merry eyes twinkled. "If I get to be so big, will you come to me with all your important cases?"

"Gracious, what important cases shall I have? Poor girls like me don't have important cases."

"Maybe you will have—when you are at the head of this business you are working for."

"Oh, Frank, how funny you are!" and Kate laughed outright. "Fancy me at the head of some business."

"Stranger things than that have happened."

"It won't happen to me. I'll be glad enough to keep a job and earn a good living."

Then they spoke of old times at home, and thus the minutes slipped by.

Suddenly Frank pulled his watch from his pocket.

"Gee! It's five minutes of one. You'll have to hurry. Let's see. I have your address, haven't I? Well, I don't know just how long I'll have to be gone on this next trip, but I'll let you know when I get back."

Kate rushed back to the office with new enthusiasm. She had the confidence of the morning with the added buoyancy of meeting an old friend. The

afternoon sped by, and, before she knew it, five o'clock had come.

For a week the world had a rosy cast. She was learning the new job with surprising quickness, and the people there were appreciative of her efforts. Occasionally, when she could not find claims, the older girl would help, and the file department was maintaining its reputation for efficiency and quick service.

But the following Saturday a catastrophe came. The office manager sent a boy asking Kate to come in to see him. Kate knew she had been working hard, but was fearful that all was not well.

He looked up kindly at her entrance and motioned toward a seat. Then in a regretful voice, he told her the news. Because of slackened business conditions, it was necessary to cut down the size of the office force. It would henceforth be necessary to operate with one girl in the file department. He was sorry to let Kate go because her work had been satisfactory, but it was the only thing to do.

A thunderbolt from the sky could not have been more sudden. Just when everything was going so splendidly! Just when the world seemed brightest.

"Oh!" she uttered, heartbroken. "And I liked it so!"

"I'm sorry," he said.

"Isn't there—isn't there any chance?" Clinging on to any hope was better than black despair.

"No, I'm afraid not."

Slowly the girl rose and walked toward the door.

"It was awfully nice here," she said, looking around and making an effort to smile. Then she closed the door and it was over.

She felt that she wanted to fall in a heap in the corner, wanted to crawl away somewhere out of sight and cry—cry until her heart broke the rest of the way. It must be almost broken now.

The change would take effect at the end of the following week. All through that depressing week she tried to go about her work with a will, but always before her was the thought of "being fired." No, she reasoned, it wasn't like being fired! It was different. Of course it was different!

## CHAPTER XVII

### PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE

ONE evening, during her last week with the National Insurance Company, Kate Martin was reading the *Conningsburg News*. Glancing idly over the pages, her eyes happened to fall on the "Personals." The first one read: "M. T. please return. Fear disaster."

Kate looked up from the paper and thought a minute. If the initials were different it might well be for her. Aunt Agnes was perhaps as worried as the person who had inserted that advertisement. Kate suddenly felt ashamed. As good as her aunt had been to her, she had run away without leaving word, without even thanking her.

She went up to her room, pulled a box of stationery from her suitcase, and wrote to her aunt. She told her she was sorry that she had had to leave, but she thought she must strike out for herself and find work.

"I won't tell her I'm practically out of a job again," Kate decided. "That will sound as though I wanted her to ask me to come back. But any-



how, whatever happens, I ought to write and let her know where I am. It's only right."

So Kate composed the letter, scratched it out several times, finally inserted the finished product in an envelope, and mailed it. Then she went to bed.

"Just when I'm getting used to bending over the files, I'll have to be leaving it," she thought. For the next day was Saturday, and her last, at the filing job.

"I'm going to try to act as if I were happy," she decided. "I hate a person who goes around with a long face even if he does feel like it inside. It's just as though you wanted everybody to know it."

So Kate kept a bright face, even though she thought her heart would break. Several of the girls stopped by during the morning and said good-bye to her. They were sorry she was not to stay.

That Saturday afternoon was spent in aimless walking about the city. There were things that Kate wanted to see—the public library, the museum, small but of real value, and a few book stores which she had heard mentioned. Before she was ready to go home, shops began to close, indicating that it was half past five.

The next afternoon after lunch, Mrs. Fletcher found Kate sitting alone on the porch.

"What are you going to do this afternoon, my dear?" she asked.

"I don't know," Kate replied. "I thought I'd go for a walk."

"Any place special?"

"Oh, no! I just didn't have anything else to do."

"How would you like to go out to the park?" the woman asked. "They have very nice band concerts."

"I'd love to," Kate replied. It was so much more pleasant to be with some one, Kate thought. Sunday of all days, it seemed, needed companionship to make it complete. Going along the street alone carried a special stamp of loneliness. It meant you had no friends or family, no one with whom you could talk over the events of the week, in whom you could confide your hopes and ambitions.

After they had reached the park, Mrs. Fletcher pressed Kate's arm to attract her attention, and nodded her head toward the right. The girl turned her head and saw three of the girls who had sat across the table from her the first morning of her arrival. With them were three young men, also gayly clad.

The six formed a circle and seemed to be laughing boisterously over some humorous incident. Again, the girl with the flashing black eyes was the center of attention. As their path led them near the group, Mrs. Fletcher and Kate glanced

toward the girls with a smile. But there was no responding smile.

"I guess they didn't see us," Kate said, after they had passed.

"Oh, don't think they didn't," Mrs. Fletcher remarked, smiling slyly. "They don't see anybody they don't want to see."

"Oh, you mean they didn't want to speak?" Kate asked, surprised. She had never known girls like this before, and she could not understand their actions.

"Of course not," the woman replied. "They were just a little afraid we might want to stop, and that would interfere with their boy friends. Oh, they're pretty crafty."

Sunday afternoon and evening soon rolled by, marking the passing of another week. Monday morning presented the same problem which had confronted the girl so often in the past few weeks—the seemingly never-ending task of job-hunting.

It was shortly after nine that Kate presented herself at the employment agency.

"Business is pretty dull now," the woman said. "But something may turn up. You might as well sit down and wait."

So Kate waited. She waited all morning and afternoon and still nothing had come in. At the end of the day the efficient-looking woman found the girl still there.

"Going to come back to us to-morrow?" she asked cheerfully.

"Yes, I'd like to," Kate replied. "I must find work."

After waiting for two hours the next morning, Kate was called into the same inner office where she had been before.

"I think I have a place for you now," the woman said. "Take this card with you and the girl outside will tell you which car to take. They want some one inexperienced for clerical work in a large wholesale business. You'll get six and a half a week."

Kate memorized the directions. She had to take two lines of cars and then walk quite a distance. It was on Main Street along the river in the far end of town.

The sun beat down on the sidewalk and the girl became very hot. She passed many commission houses with their wares out on the sidewalk. But still she was many blocks away. It would be horrible to come all this way to work, she thought. But any job was better than none. She kept close watch of the numbers and finally reached the block where two hundred and ninety should be.

There was the sign. Jensen Wholesale Grocery. Yes, that was it.

She walked inside and approached a little man working at a desk. He looked up over his glasses

at her as she presented the card. Then he frowned.

"You're too late," he said crossly. "Takes mighty long for that agency to get busy. We sent the letter three days ago."

"I think they just got it this morning," Kate ventured rather timidly.

"Well, we got tired waiting and sent for somebody else yesterday," he snapped.

After all that walk! And through the hot sun! Kate dragged her tired feet back to the car line.

But there the girl paused.

"I'm not going back home yet, no matter how tired I am. I'm going to look for something else. I'll walk back."

And this she did, scanning the fronts of the wholesale houses and the windows of stores for any signs of Help Wanted.

In all that walk she found three signs, but none of them offered a position she could fill. A restaurant wanted a man to open oysters, a store wanted a man to assist at trucking, and a thoroughly disreputable-looking restaurant wanted a dishwasher.

"I might wash dishes," thought Kate, "but not in such a looking place as that," and she shuddered and walked away swiftly.

At last, thoroughly discouraged, she arrived at her boarding place.

As she entered her room she saw an envelope lying on the corner of her dresser. Perhaps it was from Frank! She rushed over and saw the backhand writing of Aunt Agnes. Fearfully, she opened it. What if they would make her go back to Craigway. Uncle Jasper might send for her. A sudden fear clutched her heart. Then she read:

"Dear Niece: It was a great relief for me to hear from you, for I had no idea what had happened. And I'm exceedingly sorry that you left us. The household seems less cheerful now, and I miss your ringing voice and laugh. As you can suppose, your Uncle Jasper was furious when we received your letter. He insisted that I write and tell you that he is through with you, and you must now paddle your own canoe.

"It grieves me to be obliged to write this, for you know I would like to have you back. I do hope you have found satisfactory work and will be happy in it, more happy than you were here with us.

"Last week Uncle Jasper found that the theft was all a sad mistake. Nancy's cousin who, you remember, was helping us clean house at that time, confessed to having taken the money. She was so sorry about having caused you the trouble that she



finally owned up to it without any pressure from any one.

"If you should need my help, don't hesitate to write. But you had better put the letter in an envelope addressed to Nancy and I will instruct her to bring it directly to me.

"Your loving Aunt Agnes."

As Kate finished the letter, tears were in her eyes. She could read heartache between the lines. Poor Aunt Agnes! How unhappy she must be. Her letter was a dear one, even though she had to include Uncle Jasper's horrid words. But Kate was glad, glad to be through with it all, glad to be rid of any dependence on such a wretched relative as Mr. Dowling.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WAITING

GETTING up in the morning was so different, Kate Martin decided, when one had a job waiting for one. Those two weeks of office work were even more pleasant now in thought than they had been in reality. But to walk down to breakfast and not know what to do, and not know how long the money would last—it was a terrible suspense.

Wednesday and Thursday were fruitless days. Kate waited in the employment office, hoping against hope that something would come along. That's what the girls called it. They hoped a job would "come along," or that their luck would "break."

Friday she felt that anything would be better than waiting. She would go back to the peanut factory and see if they might have an opening. They seemed to hire a great many girls.

She walked down to the place and took the elevator to the second floor.

"Is you back again?" the darky greeted her.

She felt less hesitant now. Even her few weeks

of experience had given her more confidence. Her knees were none too steady, but she held her head a bit higher and was really less afraid.

"Well, how do you do?" said the owner of the tortoise-shell rimmed glasses as she approached his desk.

Kate smiled broadly.

"I thought—a—maybe you might—a—have another job now," she said in an uncertain voice. "I mean—maybe you needed another girl." When she spoke her confidence left her, as though it had been imprisoned in her mouth and escaped as she opened it.

"No, we don't need anybody," he said without hesitation. "Didn't you find an office job?"

Kate was dumbfounded. She had been afraid that he would ask about that. And what could she say? If she told him about her filing job and that they had cut down the force, he would probably think that she was merely giving that reason for being out of work. But she could not deliberately falsify the facts.

So she told him all about it.

"I know, things are rather tight now," he said. "Let's see, perhaps they might need some one over at the Fary plant. You might try there," he said, giving her a card with an address of another factory. "Tell Mr. Beggs I sent you over."

Kate thanked him and left with a lighter heart.

She might find something now. She thought of her low supply of money and dared not think of the possibility of its running out.

"I'd better walk over instead of spending seven cents on carfare," she thought. "I might need it before I get paid again."

Walks under such conditions are usually far from pleasant. But something in the air this day brought cheer, and Kate, in response to the unknown spirit, moved along over the hot pavement without noticing its heat.

"This job may be much better even than the one at filing. Who can tell? Perhaps I'll like it a million times better. Factories have offices, too. They may need some one in the office!"

But Kate vowed she would never look at another peanut at long as she lived. The overdose on that one day had settled all middle ground. No, she would not even look a peanut in the face!

She had walked out of the business district now and had to go through a poor section of the city. There were long rows of tenements with narrow streets. The doorways looked dark and unkempt. Many children were playing on the sidewalks, and they, too, looked untidy. Kate shuddered at the thought of living in these places. How terrible it must be. Especially if they had known of a place like Rockdale. There could really be no comparison.

"If they knew what nice places were to be found in the country, I guess they wouldn't stay here," she reasoned. "But then, I suppose, they are like me," she went on. "They've got to work where they can find something to do. I think, though, I'd rather be a poor farmer with a cow and a horse and chickens and a nice vegetable garden and fruit trees and flowers, than stay here day after day and year after year working in a smelly factory or a dingy little store or a noisy office."

The further she was from her old home, the fonder she became of it, the more she longed to go back, and the more she appreciated the gentle beauty of the country. And the quiet and peace! No such hustle and bustle as the city held. Just at that moment a taxicab came speeding up to the corner. On seeing another car the driver suddenly slammed on the brakes, with the resulting loud squeal. Kate held her ears. She could never get accustomed to this terrific noise. It was maddening.

She turned the corner and found herself before the entrance of a large, red brick building. The shiny windows of heavy glass and the polished brass knobs spoke of both efficiency and appreciation of beauty. It was evidently a new building. There was a display window in which Kate saw some red fire extinguishers and placards advertising them.

Inside the door there was no ceremony of lobby or elevator, but instead a large office room, as though she had taken one jump from the street and had fallen into the midst of it. From each side came the clicking of typewriters, and directly before her, behind a shiny brass rail was a telephone operator with the sign "Information" on her desk.

"I'd like to see Mr. Beggs," Kate said to the girl. She felt that if she kept up job hunting very long she would learn just how to approach people and know just what to say. Even after these few experiences, she was a hundred times more sure of herself than she had been on her first attempt.

"What about?" the telephone girl asked abruptly.

Kate bit her lip. After coming all that way, perhaps she would not be able to see this Mr. Beggs after all. If she said it was about a job, maybe this inquisitive girl would say they did not need any one. When she had been at the filing job she had heard some people say they came on a personal matter. Perhaps that would be wisest.

"It's personal," she said, after a minute's hesitation.

No doubt the operator had heard that on many other occasions. As it happened, she also had orders to guard her employer from interruptions. He could not be bothered by every one.



"He's busy now. He's writing a long report," she said.

There must be some way, Kate thought. If she turned around and walked out, there would not be a chance, but if she stayed on, something might happen. Then came another thought.

"I was sent over by the manager of the Tasty Peanut Company," she said, with an attempt at dignity.

"Oh, you were?" replied the operator, somewhat impressed. "Well, that's different. If you will wait, Mr. Beggs might have finished with his report pretty soon." The girl smiled about the corners of her tiny mouth. If Kate read the expression correctly, it meant that the boss was not writing a report at all.

"Yes, I'll wait," Kate said, taking a few steps backward toward a chair. She did not add that waiting was the best thing she had been able to do lately. She was almost capable of telling time by the number of people who passed by on the street, so often had she sat without anything else to do but watch.

Now, as she looked about her at the apparent speed with which things were accomplished, she marveled. Never had she seen people work so fast. Just a few feet away sat a pretty blond girl who was evidently transcribing a letter from notes. Her fingers flew over the keys with such speed that

the clicks all seemed to run together. Once she stopped, picked up an eraser, rubbed out a letter, and was again speeding over the keys with scarcely more than a second's intermission.

Kate took a deep breath. Would she ever in the wide world learn to be so efficient? She felt that if she worked at one thing all her life she could never rise to such heights.

Farther on, a young boy, probably the office boy, was sorting papers. Perhaps he was putting them in alphabetical order; at least, there were many different piles and many different shapes and sizes of papers. Kate noticed some small pink forms which all fell on one stack. He, too, worked with incredible speed, and in no time he was rushing away with the separate piles, first in one direction, then in another.

As Kate was watching one of the stenographers she saw farther on a door open and a tall man emerge. He walked to the desk of the girl nearest Kate and asked her to come into his office. The girl quickly picked up her notebook and two pencils and followed him. Kate observed every detail. She even noticed that the pencils both had sharp points on both ends. As the girl walked across the office she was turning the pages of her notebook in order to have it at the right place.

Soon she returned from the inner office and the telephone operator motioned to Kate.

"You can go in now," she said. "It's the door where that girl came out."

Kate Martin proudly walked through the swinging door at the railing, passed the desks, and turned the knob of Mr. Beggs' door. He smiled as she entered and extended his hand, motioning her toward a seat. At the first glance, Kate saw pleasant gray eyes, dark hair brushed smooth off the forehead, and a young face.

"You came from the Tasty Company?" he said. "The manager is a very good friend of mine."

Kate had never before seen any one like this man. She felt as though she knew him the first minute he spoke. His whole face talked along with his words, and she felt that she wanted to talk with him for a long time.

"Yes, he did," Kate answered. "He thought you might have a place for me."

Talking with this man was quite different from talking with others. That strange, tight feeling about the throat did not bother her, nor did her face grow hot, as it usually did. She could hardly understand why she did not feel afraid or ill at ease. It was more like hanging over the back fence talking about the weather with a neighbor whom you had seen walk back and forth every day.

"Well," Mr. Beggs replied thoughtfully, "I didn't know that he had heard of the opening."

But he usually keeps several jumps ahead of things. Why, yes," he went on, "one of our girls is leaving Wednesday—suddenly made up her mind to get married and is going to Chicago to live."

Kate fidgeted in her chair. She clutched the seat first with the right hand, then with the left, then smoothed her dress over her knees. Meanwhile she swallowed hard. The suddenness of the thing was almost a blow. She might have felt the same way if a cyclone had swept over the land, picked her up and landed her safely in paradise.

"Isn't that grand?" she gasped. "When I sat out there waiting, I just looked around and thought how much I'd like to work here."

"You did?" he said. When he spoke a smile played over the upper part of his face, while his lips carried a sincerity that spoke of truth and honesty.

"Well, I think you'll do. I usually take older girls, but you seem to have confidence in yourself. And you've got a good, wide-awake look about you."

As he talked, Kate liked and admired him more and more. But it all seemed bordering on the impossible. In a minute, he became more business-like. He said:

"At your age, I suppose you've graduated from grammar school and taken a business course.

You've hardly had much experience, but, then, we all have to get experience some place."

Kate's hopes suddenly tumbled down from the heights. She could almost hear them as they hit the bottom of the pit. Business course! He thought she had taken a business course! And now when he found she was without that training—without it—she could not finish the thought.

"Well—a—you see—I had a year in high school; but I never went to a business school."

"Did you get your stenographic training in the high school?"

"I—I haven't any. I never did study it at all."

"Well, I'm sorry. The job is that of stenographer to the office manager, and you'd have to take all her letters. Oh, I see," he said, after a minute's hesitation. "My friend didn't know about the opening after all. He simply thought we might have something for you."

As he saw the girl's expression and quivering lips, he arose and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Well, I know how you feel," he said. "I shouldn't have taken that for granted, then you wouldn't have been so disappointed."

Kate attempted to close her lips firmly. She must not cry! She must not! But the sympathy was too much, the broken hopes too sudden, and the kindly touch too poignant.

"Here," he said, opening the window wide, "sit

over here till you feel better. The fresh air will do you good. I have an appointment in town now, but stay as long as you want to." With a parting smile, he picked up his hat and strode out of the office.

It was not long until Kate had stopped sobbing and walked through the outer room to the street. If she had not expected it! If she had not been lifted to the point of ecstasy in thinking the place was hers!



## CHAPTER XIX

### KATE HAS A HOME

CASUALLY glancing around at the people as she strolled disconsolately along the street, Kate Martin was suddenly startled by seeing a familiar figure. A little woman in black had walked up the steps of one of the houses and now disappeared within. Kate stopped and thought hard. Yes, that must be Mrs. Lucinda Treadwell. She had only seen her back, but it was the same back which the girl had seen walking across the street before she had discovered the purse.

After a moment's hesitation, Kate dashed up the steps. But on entering the door, she found only a dark stairway before her. There was no one around, and it was almost too dark to see if there had been any one there.

"Oh, how I'd love to talk to her!" Kate thought. "It would be such a treat!"

"But it might not have been Mrs. Treadwell, after all. I didn't really look hard until I saw her going in the door."

Kate walked down the steps, uncertain what to

do, but after thinking a while decided to wait.

"This isn't where she lives, because she gave me another address," reasoned the girl. "So she will come out again sometime." She sat on the doorstep and waited. "It can't be as long as I waited at that employment agency," she mused. "And, anyhow, I've never seen places like this before. I think they're interesting even if they are terrible."

Her patience was not tried this time, for in a very few minutes a light, quick step came from behind. Kate turned around and was rewarded by the kindly face of Mrs. Treadwell.

"I'm so glad to see you!" Kate exclaimed, jumping to her feet. "I saw you go in and waited for you."

As soon as Kate spoke, recognition came into the old lady's eyes.

"And I'm more glad to see you," she said heartily. "I was just up here trying to find a cook; but the one I had heard about has moved, leaving no address. Well, I guess I won't bother about looking up any more to-day. I've been thinking a great deal about you lately, and wondered if I should see you again. I'd like you to come home with me and have lunch, won't you?"

"Oh, I'd just love to!" Kate said.

"I think we'd better ride to-day," Mrs. Treadwell decided. "Usually I love to walk for blocks and blocks, but not when it's so warm."

On the way home, Mrs. Treadwell told Kate something of the history of that section of the city. Twenty years before it had been the best residential section, but gradually, as new houses and suburbs went up farther west, the old places were deserted.

"And now, my dear, it's just these very unfortunate people who can't afford to live anywhere else who have to stay here." As she said this a soft light shone in her eyes. She looked as though she would like to help every one if she could.

After a short ride on the trolley car, they walked up a tree-lined avenue which was cool and fresh after the hot business and tenement district. The houses were all large and most of them quite old.

Kate Martin smiled as she looked about and only once did she remember the quest on which she had started. She dismissed the thought as quickly as it came. The things did not fit in with the beauty of the neighborhood and the cheerful conversation. When Mrs. Treadwell talked, Kate seemed to forget everything except what she was saying, and when suddenly the girl found herself bumping into some one or walking into the hedge, it was because she was looking up into the woman's kindly eyes and drinking in her words. Presently Mrs. Treadwell touched Kate's elbow.

"It's in here, dear," she said, as though she might be guiding her into a drugstore.

The girl's eyes opened wide with amazement. She had noticed this house especially, before they had come to it, and had been admiring it. And to think this was where Mrs. Treadwell lived!

"I simply adore your house!" Kate exploded, as they turned in over the flagstone walk. "I always wanted to live in a shingle house, and I've never even been inside one. Oh, I love it! And I love big, rambling houses where you almost get lost walking around the rooms. It's fun to wander around them in books, but you can really do it here, can't you?"

Mrs. Treadwell smiled at the girl's delight.

"I like it too," she said. "But we like anything that means home to us. Let's go and get a bite to eat first; then I want to hear all about you. I was afraid you might be here for only a short visit, and wouldn't be able to come to see me."

Kate started to say that she had not come on a visit at all, but Mrs. Treadwell was busy talking about what they would have for lunch and Kate did not say anything.

"Do you like lamb chops, dear? Yes? I'll cut this bread and we'll serve the chops on toast. The meat platter looks prettier that way, I think. Then I'll fix some fruit salad. Does that sound good to you?"

Kate almost burned the bottom of one of the bread squares, but Mrs. Treadwell just laughed and said: "I like it very dark. How did you know I wanted mine like that?"

Kate's hostess prepared some lemonade, then added some grape juice. "I always like to think I'm drinking pink lemonade at a circus," she explained, as she colored the contents of the glasses. "Then all we need do is drop some tin lids and a few skillets and it sounds like a circus, too."

"That would sound like a tin band even if it wasn't a brass band," said Kate, and this made the old lady laugh heartily.

"Do you know what I once thought of doing?" she asked.

Kate shook her head.

"It was when I was about twelve years of age. I went to a circus and there was a girl riding on a milk-white horse and doing all sorts of fancy stunts, jumping through hoops and over banners and everything. When I got home that night I made up my mind that I would run away and join a circus."

"You never did!" gasped Kate.

"You are right, I didn't. Do you know why? When I got ready I crawled downstairs and opened the back door to go out. I found it was raining and just as I walked out on the porch

there came the biggest crack of thunder you ever heard. I thought I was struck by the lightning and I was so scared I ran back to my room and covered myself with a blanket—and that was the end of my joining a circus." Then the old lady laughed and Kate laughed too.

When they had finished their lunch, Mrs. Treadwell took the girl by the hand.

"Now we're going to leave those dishes," she said. "I want to hear all about your visit and your school—and all about you, too," she added.

They entered a small glass-enclosed room which Mrs. Treadwell called her fairy bower. There were several cretonne-covered large chairs and a divan, and all about were large ferns stretching out and down.

"First, tell me how long you're going to stay," Mrs. Treadwell began.

"Why, I didn't come on a visit," Kate replied. "I came to find a job and live here."

"You, find a job!" exclaimed her hostess, in amazement. "Why, you're just a little girl. I thought you had come up to visit an aunt, perhaps. You don't mean you're not going to school this fall?"

"No, I'm not. You see, my parents were both killed last spring in an accident." Despite her attempt to keep back the tears, they sprang into



her eyes, and she put her hands to her face. In a flash Mrs. Treadwell was at her side and her arms were about the girl.

"You poor child! What you must have gone through!"

In a short time Kate brushed the tears from her eyes and tried bravely to smile. She told of her life with her Aunt Agnes and her Uncle Jasper Dowling and of her leaving them. Then of the struggles to find work and her unsuccessful efforts of the last few days.

"Well, I believe a good angel must have arranged for us to meet," the old lady said kindly. "I don't know when I've enjoyed a lunch so much as to-day. I wonder if we couldn't always have them together?"

She smiled at the girl in mysterious silence for a short time, then spoke again.

"You know I'm looking for a cook," she said, "and I'm so glad I didn't find Tess there to-day. I wonder if you couldn't cook?" she asked. Before the girl had an opportunity to answer, she went on. "I know what we'll do! We'll get the meals together, and then you can get lost in these rooms just as often as you want to," she said playfully.

For a time the girl could not speak. "Oh!" she gasped at last. But her eyes told of the wonder of it and the inexpressible relief. The glory of it all! Then she put her handkerchief

to her eyes and brushed away a few tears of joy which had come.

She was overcome with happiness. She knelt by the side of Mrs. Treadwell and buried her face in the old lady's lap.

"I—I don't know what to say—I'm so glad—so glad!" she gasped.

She felt the soft hand patting her head and brushing her rumpled hair smooth, and she could imagine the soft blue eyes looking down at her kindly.

"Well, don't say anything, dear, and I'll understand. It must have been a terrible strain on you. And you're too young for anything like that. Goodness knows what would have happened! I'm so thankful that it has turned out like this. And I'm not only glad for you, but I'm glad for myself. It will be wonderful to have you here."

## CHAPTER XX

### A CATASTROPHE

THE next few weeks were pleasant ones for Kate Martin. They were so delightful that she wanted to get up early in the morning so as not waste any of the day, and at night she did not want to go to bed because sleeping seemed such a waste of time when there were so many wonderful things to do.

Mrs. Treadwell usually superintended the preparation of the meals and Kate did the actual cooking. "It's a good thing for you to learn to cook, dear," the old lady said. "And I'm going to make a perfect housekeeper of you, so that when you get older you will have it at the ends of your fingers."

In the morning they would do the marketing together and in the afternoon sit out among the trees and read, or, if it was not too warm, take a long walk.

Kate got to love those walks. There was always much to see, and the old lady had much to tell that was new and interesting.

"How do you happen to know it all?" asked the girl one day.

"At home you will find books on trees and books on birds, my dear. Read them some time. You will find them very fascinating," and later on Kate took her advice and the volumes proved all that Mrs. Treadwell had claimed for them. After that Kate knew many more of the trees and shrubs and birds by their names.

Kate never tired of roaming over the house and admiring its furnishings. There were fourteen rooms, large, airy ones, and they were spread literally in all directions. As is true in some of the older houses, there would be a step up or down into some of the rooms, lending a certain quaint air.

One afternoon Mrs. Gauss, a friend of Mrs. Treadwell's, called in her car. Lorraine, a niece of the woman, sat languidly in the back seat while her aunt went in to see if Mrs. Treadwell and Kate were ready.

"Now you and Lorraine get acquainted back there," Mrs. Gauss said pleasantly to Kate, as she opened the door of the car for the girl. "Mrs. Treadwell will keep me from being lonesome up here."

Kate had met Lorraine in town the previous week and had been impressed by the girl's poise and beauty. Lorraine's large black eyes and dark

brown hair gave an air of languor to the features, and the small delicately shaped red lips might have been painted on some exquisite wall panel.

"I love to ride out this road, don't you?" Kate observed, by way of starting the conversation. She had been over it only twice before, and did not know whether it was prettier than the other roads or not, but she would have enjoyed riding out through the country on any of them.

"Yes," Lorraine answered with a drawl, "it's rather nice."

"I just love it!" Kate continued. "You know, when I look over the hills and at the woods over there, sometimes I just let myself imagine that I'm at home in Rockdale again and that I'm riding through the country there. Of course, it's a little different, but I guess the trees and sky and clouds are about the same. Let's see," Kate reasoned philosophically, "I believe they're prettier there because there's more of them."

"You know, we have farmhouses every couple of miles, and somehow they look more like farms than these places do. I love real farmhouses, don't you? I have always wanted to live on a farm, but I never did—that is, except a little while visiting in the summer. Did you ever feel as if you wanted to live on a farm?"

Kate continued to look far over the gray-green hills, then suddenly remembered that she had

asked a question and that it had not been answered. She turned to Lorraine to repeat the query. The lovely brown eyes were closed and the regular breathing had its intimation.

"Well, of all things!" Kate exclaimed indignantly. "To go to sleep when I'm talking to her! I guess she didn't care what I said. She makes me furious!"

With a frown spread over the blue eyes, Kate stared out into the country. But it looked less attractive now.

"I'd like to pinch her to wake her up," Kate thought. Then her eyes dropped to the floor where some crystalline rocks were piled. She had stepped over them in getting into the car.

"I feel like taking that big one and setting it on her hand," she muttered. "It would serve her right. The idea of not appreciating the scenery! No, I can't do that," she decided. "And I can't step on her foot, either."

For some time she turned over plans of revenge in her mind. And as the plans were considered and rejected, her indignation grew. Finally a smile of contentment spread over her face, and she stole a quick glance at Lorraine to make sure that the girl was still asleep.

Stooping down, she picked up one of the medium-sized rocks. Then she scrutinized the road ahead. Yes, just before the cross roads was a



rough place in the asphalt. That was just the spot!

Looking ahead and stretching her arm about the height of the seat above Lorraine's foot, she delicately balanced the rock between her two fingers. At the bump, the rock slipped.

"Ouch, my foot!" groaned Lorraine, suddenly awakening and grasping the injured toe with her hands.

"What's the matter?" asked Kate, as Mrs. Treadwell turned about.

"Did a bee sting you, Lorraine?" the old lady asked.

"No, when we went over that bump, one of the rocks hit my foot," Lorraine said. She had less of a drawl now.

"Did it hurt you very badly?" her aunt asked. "I should have taken that bump more slowly, but I didn't know it was so large."

"Oh, it's all right," answered Lorraine, but she continued to keep her foot curled in her lap, having removed the pump.

Kate's amusement had now turned to repentance. "Maybe the rock was too big," she thought. "Maybe it did hurt her, but she needed something."

That evening Mrs. Treadwell spoke to Kate of the incident.

"I wonder if that hurt the girl very much?" the old lady asked solicitously.

"She made me mad. I'm glad it jumped on her," Kate said, as she told of Lorraine's indifference. Then she hastily turned the conversation.

One day Mrs. Treadwell asked Kate to accompany her downtown. She wanted to buy a fall dress and desired Kate's help in selecting it.

"You know," she confessed to the girl, "I can pick out a good book in no time, but when it comes to choosing dresses I haven't a bit of taste. Just so I get something that doesn't drag too far toward my ankles and doesn't flop down over my fingers, I'll think that it fits, and I don't realize until some good friend of mine tells me about it, that it isn't my type of dress at all. So you see, my dear, you must be my critic, and you must keep me from buying clothes that aren't suited to me."

"Why, your clothes aren't like that," Kate objected. But inwardly she understood. Many times when she had first come to live with Mrs. Treadwell she had wondered at the queer clothes the old lady wore. But as she grew to know her better and love her, the attire was part of the personality, and Kate felt they were just the kind she should wear.

On this particular morning they started early and walked down to the district where most of

the retail shops were located, a matter of two miles. After much discussion and shopping about, they finally decided on a pale lavender linen.

"But I wanted a fall dress," Mrs. Treadwell stated.

"Oh, but you look so sweet in this!" Kate exclaimed. So the pale lavender was bought.

As they stepped out of the elevator at Jordan's, where the gown had been bought, Mrs. Treadwell caught a glimpse of the clock on the wall. "My dear, it's eleven o'clock already, and you know Mrs. Gauss is coming over to have lunch with us at twelve." As they hurried out of the store into one of the side streets Mrs. Treadwell turned to Kate.

"I think you'd better go back after that linen we 'phoned about yesterday, while I run over to get those coat hangers at the ten-cent store. Then, as soon as we can, we'll meet at the corner to take the car home."

Kate rushed about through the aisles, ordered the towels to be sent, and reached the place of meeting long before it was possible for Mrs. Treadwell to return.

Before very long the girl spied the figure of her friend making her way along the sidewalk. There were very few people at the intersection of the streets, and little traffic.

As Kate was giving a smile of welcome to Mrs.

Treadwell from across the street, the girl saw a taxicab coming from the left at a high rate of speed. Mrs. Treadwell had already stepped off the curb and was starting across. In a flash Kate screamed, but Mrs. Treadwell was busy adjusting a bundle under her arm and did not hear or see.

Then, scarcely knowing what she was doing, the girl darted to the middle of the street and pushed the old lady back with all her might. There was a shrill screech of brakes, a dull thud, a moan. Kate had not cleared the path of the car.

## CHAPTER XXI

### FUNDS ARE RUNNING LOW

IN a minute the driver of the taxicab was out of his car and, with Mrs. Treadwell's aid, he tried to assist Kate Martin to her feet. But the girl groaned with pain and her face went white.

"The child has fainted. Go get some water," Kate heard the old lady say as from far away. She felt a dull pain in her foot and a queer numbness.

Before the driver came back with the water, Mrs. Treadwell was sitting on the curb holding the girl. She bathed her face and put the glass to her lips, but Kate was still too breathless to swallow anything.

"Get these people away—they'll smother her," Mrs. Treadwell commanded the driver. "You'd better carry her to the nearest doctor," the old lady said.

A half block down the street they found a doctor who examined the girl carefully. Meanwhile, Mrs. Treadwell looked on and waited

anxiously. Kate raised her head and smiled across the room. It was an assuring smile and charged the air with confidence. Mrs. Treadwell, before the doctor had time to examine the now swollen ankle, interrupted with a question.

"Is she badly hurt, Doctor?" Her voice was so tender and fearful that the white-coated man straightened up a minute to answer her.

"No. I believe all I'll find is a slightly sprained ankle. Her weight must have forced the ankle over as she was thrown down. She was quite fortunate at that."

For several weeks after the accident, a slight, willowy figure could be seen hopping about the Treadwell home on crutches. There was a spring and lightness as she swung herself along, that made one almost doubt whether she needed the crutches. But the ankle was still badly swollen and discolored and daily hot water applications, as well as tight bandaging, were necessary.

One day after lunch, Kate was sitting in the library turning the pages of an illustrated travel book. She looked up as she saw Mrs. Treadwell enter the room. From the old lady's expression Kate knew that something must be wrong.

"I'll bet you're not feeling well," Kate said. "I can tell by your eyes."

"Oh, it's just that rheumatism in my arm again," the woman replied, with a shrug. Kate knew from



former occasions that Mrs. Treadwell would seldom acknowledge that she was ill.

"I wonder if you'll write a letter for me?" Mrs. Treadwell asked. "I've been putting it off a long time now, and it should go off soon."

Kate knew from this request that the arm must hurt pretty badly if Mrs. Treadwell could not write with it.

"Oh, gee! Then you can call me your secretary, can't you? I always did want to have a job with a dignified name—something that I could make myself believe was really important."

"We'll call you private secretary, or corresponding secretary, or anything you'd like. Or you can interchange your titles every day if you'd rather," was the laughing response.

Kate giggled, then asked:

"Who is it that's to get the letter, Mrs. Treadwell?"

"I want you to write to my lawyer," the old lady answered, as she handed Kate a sheet of cream-colored paper and a fountain pen.

After the letter had been dictated slowly, the girl read it over aloud to see that she had written it correctly. The contents startled her. Slowly the full meaning unfolded itself and filtered through her mind. Evidently, Mrs. Treadwell had lost a great deal of money through poor investments, and she was now writing to her lawyer

asking if she could soon hope for some revenue from them. No doubt, from the tone of the letter, former correspondence had pointed to a total loss of the money. Mrs. Treadwell, now that her finances were getting dangerously low, was writing a last appeal.

"I'm so sorry!" Kate exclaimed sympathetically. "I didn't know about it."

"Now don't worry about that at all, Kate."

But Kate would not be quieted.

"You know what I'm going to do?" she asked in a determined manner, as though she had made an irrevocable decision. "I'm going to take care of my foot a little while longer, until it gets so I can walk on it, and then I'm going to get a job."

"You're not going to do anything of the kind," Mrs. Treadwell replied with mock emphasis. "Don't worry your little head about my finances. We'll get on some way."

Many times since Kate had been there, the girl had spoken of finding work and helping Mrs. Treadwell in the morning and evening, but now, since there seemed such desperate need, she felt she must do it.

Two weeks had passed since Kate wrote the letter, and in the two weeks the foot had become considerably better. She still kept it tightly bandaged, but she could now walk without the aid of crutches.

She went one morning to a department store to look for a present for Mrs. Treadwell's birthday. She bought a small vial of jasmine perfume which she intended decorating with some satin ribbon as an ornament for the dresser.

Walking out of the store, she was surprised to see that it had begun to rain very hard. She stepped back to the doorway to wait until it should slacken, so that she could venture over to the street car.

Suddenly she forgot all about the rain or her weak ankle, and rushed from the entrance.

"Frank! Oh, Frank," she called, as she saw Frank Coburn passing by near the curb.

Immediately he heard her voice and turned.

"What luck!" he exclaimed when he saw the girl. "I just got back yesterday. Did you get my letter?" he asked.

"No. But I was looking and looking for it," Kate replied. "Oh, I'll bet I know! You sent it to my old address and they forgot to forward it to me. You know I'm living with Mrs. Treadwell now—that darling old lady I told you about that I met on the bus."

"You don't say! Well, I'm glad to hear that. I hated to think of you being by yourself here."

"I'm going to be looking for a job pretty soon, as quickly as my ankle gets all right," she told

him, explaining about her accident. "Mrs. Treadwell hasn't let me go out until to-day."

Then she told Frank about the bad investments, how Mrs. Treadwell, after the death of her husband had placed most of her money in some bonds and stock which had proved worthless.

"That's too bad," Frank said. "But people will lose their money foolishly. You have to be mighty careful what kind of things you invest in. It's a mighty ticklish business—this business of investing money."

After a short talk the two parted, Frank promising to go to visit the girl in a few days. He expected to be in town for quite a while.

That afternoon Kate and Mrs. Treadwell were sitting in the garden talking. Kate was telling of her life at the Dowlings, and of how hard it had been for her to become accustomed to their ways.

"But it was such a pretty house," she said, smiling at the memory. "You know Mr. Dowling is a rich broker. I think that's what they called it, and they had a big machine and a chauffeur. But the house wasn't a bit homelike."

Mrs. Treadwell, who had been listening with interest, suddenly began to look unusually thoughtful.

"My dear, does your uncle belong to the firm of

Dowling, Jackson and Brule?" she asked slowly.

Kate wondered at her tone.

"Why, yes, I believe that's what it is," she answered.

For a minute Mrs. Treadwell was silent. She seemed to be thinking whether to tell the girl or not. Then she said:

"You might as well know, Kate. That was the firm who sold me the worthless securities."

As the girl looked at her benefactor, she seemed very old and tired.

## CHAPTER XXII

### FRANK ATTEMPTS TO HELP

KATE MARTIN was careful never to refer to her hostess' finances or the necessity of her finding work. She could understand from Mrs. Treadwell's tone that the straitened circumstances were painful enough without having to be reminded of them. Kate merely acted as though she were anxious to go to work for its own sake.

"You know, Mrs. Treadwell," Kate remarked one day, "it makes me just terribly envious to see the girls pass by here in the morning going to work. It makes me feel as though I was sort of helpless, or something, and wasn't able to work. And, goodness, when I see them all come home talking and laughing in the evening, I hardly know what to do with myself."

"You certainly can dramatize things, dear," Mrs. Treadwell remarked fondly. "Really, Kate, you hardly ever think of it unless we get to talking about it. Besides, those girls who pass here are all a couple of years older than you."



"But two years do not make any great difference," sighed Kate.

"It is enough. Just content yourself."

Mrs. Treadwell was glad to see Kate take such an interest in things about the house. In the past the old lady had often allowed matters to drift—especially when she was not feeling extra well. Kate found several clothing closets bulging with odds and ends and asked permission to put them in order.

"Go as far as you please," was the old lady's prompt answer. "I have been wanting to sort out that stuff for years. Maybe you can find something there you would like to use or wear; if so, it's yours."

Kate went to work with a will. The sorting took two days, and she found several garments that she could use and also several fine lace handkerchiefs.

"I've been wondering what became of those handkerchiefs," said Mrs. Treadwell.

"Where shall I put them?" asked Kate.

"In the lower drawer of the small bureau. But if you ever want to use them, don't hesitate to do so."

The days passed uneventfully until Sunday afternoon. As Kate rushed to the door to answer the bell, she could see through the curtain a tall

form in a dark suit. It was Frank! He stood there, hat in hand, straight and good-looking.

"Now how did you know we were going to make candy?" Kate asked, with a welcoming smile.

"Just felt it in the air," Frank replied. "I haven't tasted homemade candy in an age. Honest-to-goodness, going to make some?"

Frank traded his coat for a white apron and when the fudge had cooked sufficiently he was given the job of beating it. Meanwhile Mrs. Treadwell had chopped up some nuts to put in it.

"I used to try making it at home when nobody was there," Frank confessed. "The only trouble was that I'd always have to eat it with a spoon. I'd use only about half a cup of sugar, though."

"Why didn't you cook it longer, silly?" Kate queried.

"Well, the first time I had to dig it out of the pan with a knife because it wouldn't pour out, so I wanted to make sure it was soft enough afterwards."

Mrs. Treadwell looked up over her glasses.

"That's the whole secret of life," she said. "We must strike the middle course in everything. And that's what most of us can't do."

"I know I can't do it," Kate commented. "Why, I can't even walk in the middle of the sidewalk when I'm walking with Mrs. Treadwell. When I watch her eyes and listen to her talk I find myself

running into the hedge and into lamp-posts and everything."

A short time later the fudge had cooled, and they were sitting in what Mrs. Treadwell called her fairy bower. Suddenly Kate thought of the bonds.

"Oh, Mrs. Treadwell, do get out those bonds and let Frank see them!" she exclaimed in her impetuous way. "I know he can help about it. He can do so many things! Why, this spring, I remember, he set Rover's foot and now Mr. Thompson writes he runs around as well as he ever did."

"Yes, I'll let Frank see the papers," responded Mrs. Treadwell.

"No, tell me where they are, and I'll get them," Kate said, as Mrs. Treadwell began to rise.

The girl ran up the stairs and soon came down with a large manila envelope. "Gee, they look awfully important," she said, as she handed them to Mrs. Treadwell.

In a short time the old lady had finished explaining the situation to Frank. The boy, always alert and active, listened with keen interest, frequently asking some question or making some suggestion.

"I wonder if you'd mind my taking them along?" Frank asked. "I believe Mr. Wheeler would know something about them. He's such a

good scout about things. He'd go to no end of trouble to help."

"Why, of course you can take them along," Mrs. Treadwell answered. "I'll be so glad to know something definite. I'm so tired of this eternal waiting and waiting. It seems that my lawyer can never give me any satisfactory information about them."

They talked about Frank's work and his future.

"You have splendid ambition," Mrs. Treadwell said to him. "A boy like you can't help but succeed with such a fine spirit about work."

The afternoon quickly passed, and despite the invitation to stay for tea, Frank had to leave.

"I'll let you know as soon as I find out anything about these," he said, as he placed the envelope in his inside pocket.

Only a few days passed, and Frank Coburn returned to the Treadwell home.

The girl greeted him cordially, but at the same time looked questioningly into his face. He seemed rather somber, as though all were not well.

"I'll bet you're just playing stage, the way we used to do in Rockdale, aren't you?" she asked him, suspecting the serious look to be a ruse.

"No. I only wish I were," he returned, looking about to see if Mrs. Treadwell was in the room. Then he spoke in a lower tone to Kate.

"I hate to have to tell her, Kate. But it looks as though there was mighty little chance to recover on those bonds. You know there's a lot of swindling going on nowadays, and a person with money to invest has to be awfully careful. You see, all brokerage firms aren't honest, and people without experience are pretty much out of luck unless they know whom they're doing business with."

"But, Frank, you don't mean that it's absolutely hopeless, do you? Oh, there must be some little chance!" Kate's whole life was ruled by optimism, and it never seemed to forsake her even under the most drastic circumstances.

At that moment they heard Mrs. Treadwell's step coming from the back of the house.

"Be careful what you say, Frank, because I know she's awfully worried," Kate whispered.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FAINT HOPE

THE next morning found Mrs. Treadwell entering the office of the firm where Frank Coburn was employed. Although the boy entertained little hope for the recovery of the widow's money, yet he wanted to feel that no stone had been left unturned. Thinking that Mr. Wheeler, his employer, might find some way of working out the problem, he had asked Mrs. Treadwell to visit the office.

Mr. Wheeler was a kindly old man with white hair, blue eyes, and something of a mischievous smile. At least, Kate Martin thought she could see some mischief in the background of the smile which he could haul out at a moment's notice. As he arose to greet them and acknowledged Frank's introduction, he became grave, and invited them to have a seat.

"So you've been worrying about your investments?" he began. "Well, I don't blame you. I would have too."

"Yes, it's been three years now since I've drawn



any dividends from them," Mrs. Treadwell said. "And lately my lawyer hasn't given me any hope at all. In fact, he's practically given up my affairs. Then, it's been just during this last year that I've realized I'm about at the end of things."

Mrs. Treadwell spoke quietly, but back of her words was the tragic understanding that she would soon be without funds. Most of her life had been free from worry about finances, and without training it was very hard to scrimp and save.

A shadow of sympathy passed over Mr. Wheeler's ruddy face, but in a minute he was again the stern business man.

"Well, I've examined the papers rather carefully, but I don't know that anything can be done about them. Now, if you want us to, we'll take up the matter with the Dowling firm and find out if it is a hopeless matter."

"I'd certainly be glad if you would," Mrs. Treadwell said.

As Frank took them to the elevator, Kate walked along beside him, beaming proudly.

"You look like a real lawyer," she said. "Just as though you were handling million-dollar cases."

Mrs. Treadwell, walking on the other side of Frank, placed her hand fondly on his shoulder.

"He won't have to wait many years before that comes true. I think he has wonders in store."

"I'll be over the very first evening I have any news," Frank called, as they started down in the elevator.

That afternoon the rain poured from the sky, and although Mrs. Treadwell had promised to allow Kate to look again for a position, she forbade it on this day.

"Why, Mrs. Treadwell, the rain won't hurt me! It can't do a thing but sift through the umbrella. I love to feel the rain fall in my face, anyhow. When I was at home I used to put on an old dress when it rained and walk along with my face turned toward the sky. I simply love to walk in the rain! Besides, I think it would bring me good luck. Honest now, don't you?"

It was hard for Mrs. Treadwell to resist the pleading, but she was firm.

"My dear, just think if you would slip on that ankle. Only a little turn would throw it out of place, and then we'd have to haul out the crutches again."

"Oh, but you don't really think I'd turn on it, do you? I'd walk along so carefully. You know, just like Japanese women go with little steps." Kate hopped along in such a clever imitation that the old lady almost consented. But she decided to compromise.

"If you'll stay at home this afternoon, I'll let

you go to-morrow morning, even if there's a cyclone. Now, isn't that a good bargain?"

The next morning Kate awoke early with the spirit of adventure and tiptoed down the stairs so that she would not awaken Mrs. Treadwell. But when she reached the living room there was the old lady with her white boudoir cap and blue kimono sitting by the window reading.

Kate crept along quietly from the back and suddenly jumped around in front. Mrs. Treadwell looked up from her book calmly.

"I heard you when you put your foot on the top step, my dear. You couldn't keep all that enthusiasm quiet, no matter how hard you tried. But here I am again," she said in a tone of resignation, as she motioned to her arm.

For the first time Kate saw that it was tied with a sling around the old lady's neck.

"Gee, that's a shame!" the girl exclaimed.

While Kate's first thought was for her benefactor, her second thought was for herself. If Mrs. Treadwell could not have the use of both hands, then Kate could not leave the house. She would have to stay to take care of the housework and the cooking. Besides there was ironing which had to be done.

Nothing was said about the job-hunting expedition, and Kate flew about from one thing to

another, sweeping, dusting, ironing, then preparing dinner.

"I can't go job hunting when she is laid up like this," the girl told herself. "It is up to me to do every bit of the work."

"Kate, you mustn't kill yourself," said Mrs. Treadwell as she caught sight of the girl bustling around. "Leave something for to-morrow."

"Oh, I'm not working too hard. Besides, I really like it."

"You certainly do very well. You have been well brought up."

"I'm afraid my Uncle Jasper wouldn't say that of me."

"Humph! Little the best of men know about such things! They are too much wrapped up in business."

To this Kate did not answer. But she caught herself thinking of Frank and wondering if her friend would be like those men Mrs. Treadwell had in mind.

"I rather guess he won't be," she told herself.

The days passed and the arm did not improve, but that was not the only concern of the household. They were eagerly awaiting news from Frank Coburn, and each evening they would talk of his coming. But a whole week passed and there was no word.

"I suppose they can't do anything about the matter," Mrs. Treadwell concluded. "If the money's lost, nobody can get it back."

"Oh, I've got all kinds of hopes," Kate declared, with her usual enthusiasm. "I bet it just takes a long time and that they're getting everything fixed up before they tell you about it, so it will be a real surprise when it comes."

But Kate forced a smile to her face as she spoke. Since Frank had held such little hope, the girl, too, believed that all was lost. But as long as there was the faintest hope, she must try to encourage Mrs. Treadwell.

The old lady smiled at the girl's buoyancy.

"You're such a comfort," she said, one evening. "You're enough to put anybody in a good humor."

Just then the doorbell rang and Kate rushed to answer it.

"It's Frank! I can tell by the way he rings!" the girl exclaimed.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### BLUE SKY AHEAD

It was Frank Coburn who had rung the doorbell. He fairly sprang through the door as soon as Kate opened it and rushed over to Mrs. Treadwell's chair.

"What do you think?" he exclaimed, with his inimitable smile. "We've got 'em on the run! We're going to make Dowling, Jackson and Brule disgorge! Mr. Wheeler is mailing the securities out to you in the morning with a letter of explanation."

"You—you don't mean they're good?" Mrs. Treadwell gasped. "I feel as if I had been finding my way through a huge, dark forest, and that now I had suddenly come in sight of the sunlight. It seems strange to look back over it now. The whole thing is like an ugly nightmare."

Kate threw her arms about the old lady and kissed her, although it was not the first time that evening.

"You've been so brave about it!" the girl exclaimed. "Nobody'd ever know how worried you



were. Why, Frank," she said, turning to the boy, "I've been trying and trying ever since my ankle was well to go out and find a job, and, do you know, Mrs. Treadwell would never let me go? First it was my ankle, and then the weather, and this last time I actually believe that rheumatism was just make-believe."

At this last remark from the girl Mrs. Treadwell looked sternly at her as though in rebuke, but as the old lady glanced at Frank, the blue eyes had in them a spark of mischief as though in tacit agreement.

"Isn't she splendid, Frank?" whispered Kate, when she got the chance.

"I'll say she is!" the young fellow answered. "You couldn't have fallen into better hands."

"Oh, Frank, she has been so kind! And she does everything in such a way you can't feel hurt or offended."

"She's a real lady of the old school."

"I hope she gets every cent that is due her."

"So do I—and I think she will."

"How wicked some men must be."

"Sure are. If it wasn't so lawyers wouldn't have anything to do, Kate," and Frank grinned broadly.

"Oh, but Frank, all law work isn't criminal work!" she protested.

"I know it—I was only fooling. Many of the

best of our lawyers handle very few criminal cases."

That night the house must have been blessed with kindly angels, for both the old lady and the girl had happy dreams. Kate was sailing through the air over Rockdale and dropping sparkling gems over the houses of her friends. She saw herself clothed in colors of the setting sun with a dash of orchid and cream and pink.

But the morning was most glorious of all. At half past eight the postman walked up the street and was met by two eager people.

"We were afraid our mail might be too heavy for you to carry any farther," Kate said, as they neared him.

Since it was almost a half block away from their house, the postman had to finger through the mail while Kate and Mrs. Treadwell followed with their eyes each movement of his finger. After a few seconds they were rewarded. A long manila envelope about twice the size of the one they had left at the office, was handed to them.

Mrs. Treadwell eagerly tore it open and unfolded the papers inside. On the top was a full page letter. As she read it, joy, amazement and wonder shone in her eyes, and as she reached the end she threw her arms about Kate, schoolgirl fashion, and hugged her.

"My dear, see what you've done for me!" she exclaimed.

Kate, who had deciphered only the first paragraph and had not understood much of that, simply smiled broadly and looked at her friend, knowing that she would explain.

"What is it?" she finally asked as Mrs. Treadwell, almost unable to believe, again perused the letter.

"Oh, it's almost unbelievable!" she gasped, too surprised still to make any explanation.

By this time Kate took the letter, and although the technical information given meant little to her, she read the line:

"If you will call at our office to sign the papers, we will credit to you the amount of ten thousand dollars in the form you desire. This is due you in addition to the bonds we are inclosing."

Words were inadequate. They walked side by side, arm in arm, both old and young face bathed in the happiest of smiles. When they reached the front porch, Mrs. Treadwell, followed by Kate, walked around to the side and sat down in a chair.

"It means, Kate, that we can do the things we want. My dear, you'll not have to worry about that job now. We can fix up the house. We can have the roof patched, and we can fix up your room just like that description you read me the

other day. And, my dear, we can get the cook back again and another girl. But remember, dear, you must stay on with me. You'll be my secretary, won't you?"

"Oh, it's almost too good to believe! I think I must be dreaming! Are you sure? Are you sure you read it aright?"

That afternoon Mrs. Treadwell sent Kate out into the yard to pick some flowers while she made a telephone call. The result was a visit from Frank Coburn for dinner that evening.

The table was arranged with flowers and place-cards, and the old lady said:

"We'll have enough fun to make up for a dozen more people."

Just before dinner Kate was sent on an errand that took her upstairs, and while she was gone Frank and Mrs. Treadwell exchanged some hasty words. As they heard the girl coming down the steps, Mrs. Treadwell asked her to go up after another article which required a few minutes of searching.

After the meal Mrs. Treadwell arose at her place and said:

"Now suppose we call this Kate's birthday party, for it really is the birth of a new day for her."

Kate looked from one to the other in surprise.

"But why—" she began.

At the signal, Frank arose and, with a low bow, handed the girl a scroll which he took from his pocket and around which was a blue ribbon.

Kate, not knowing what to make of it all, feverishly unrolled it and read in Mrs. Treadwell's writing:

*In gratitude to Kate and Frank for their loyal help, I am giving each, one thousand dollars.*

The girl sank back in the chair and closed her eyes for a minute.

"Oh—no!" she breathed.

## CHAPTER XXV

### WHAT KATE FOUND WAITING

THAT evening fused into a series of days and weeks and months of joy. The sky took on another hue; the sun shown a warmer, more golden light.

Kate and Mrs. Treadwell carried out the dreams which had such a short time before seemed futile. The roof was patched, new furniture was bought, Kate's room was done over in pink and cream with the daintiest white curtains. Even the floors were given a parquet finish.

But the strain on Mrs. Treadwell had been too great to withstand such a sudden shock, and in the beginning of the winter a breakdown came. Doctors were consulted with but one result. She must travel. She must spend the cold months in the South where the flowers were blooming and the air was warm.

Before going, however, she insisted on a compromise. She wanted to go West, not South. So West she went, on the journey to find health, taking Kate Martin with her.



Over the Santa Fe trail, past the tiny desert towns, they rode, stopping off and buying Indian trinkets from the squaws at the stations.

At Albuquerque, where the tourists had lunch, Kate was especially fascinated by a young Indian girl with her display of beads. With brown, immobile features, coarse black braids, and brown beaded dress, the native girl stared straight ahead.

"They're just like the desert," Kate thought, "and I don't understand either of them."

They took the branch line at Williams to the Grand Cañon, made a trip on burros down the winding and many times treacherous path into the cañon, viewed with rapture the many-colored rocks as the setting sun changed them to gold, rose, blue, then purple.

"I don't think fairyland could be any more beautiful," Kate said, as they stood by the rim of the cañon, looking far across the chasm. "It makes you want to do big things, doesn't it? It makes you want to be worth while and fine."

Then there were the trips in the purple Rockies, along the roaring, restless sea, drives down to San Diego and into Tia Juana, which they reached after crossing the Mexican border with its customs officials. Each new experience was like turning to the next page of an exciting novel, and Kate lived as she had never lived before.

Three years passed, and Mrs. Treadwell had fully regained her health. She seemed to have taken ten years off her age, and the light, springy step seemed that of a young woman.

Their traveling was now over, and on the first of September, accompanied by suitcases, hat boxes and trunks, the two returned to their home in Conningsburg which was decorated with flowers and ribbons for the occasion.

The first of September was no chance date. They had planned to reach home at this time, even though a few of their dates had to be canceled. The secret of the importance lay in a trial which was taking place in the Conningsburg county court. Frank Coburn had been assigned his first case, and he had written to Kate: "I know that I can win if you're in town and thinking of me." So they had promised to be back.

Early that evening the doorbell rang in the same way it had sounded three years before, and in bounded the same tall, alert, brown-haired boy. He was a little heavier now and there was a sterner, more serious look in his fine eyes.

But at sight of Kate Martin all the sternness disappeared and tenderness shown there instead.

"I thought you were never coming back, dear!" he said, as he kissed her.

Three days went by in which Kate saw little of the young attorney. On the evening of that third

day the doorbell rang and Kate rushed to the door.

"Tell me, Frank, did you win your case?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes," he answered. "But I've something far more important that I want to tell you about."

Just then Mrs. Treadwell came up to greet Frank, and Kate's curiosity had to be curbed until later in the evening.

"I wonder if you'll forgive me if I retire early this evening," Mrs. Treadwell said, after she had talked with Frank over his case. "I dare say you two have enough to talk about to keep you busy for a month without any time off."

"You can't go right away," Frank declared. "I've got something you have to see. It's great. Just came to-day." He drew a typewritten letter from an envelope and handed it to Mrs. Treadwell. "Read it aloud," he said.

"The court has awarded to Miss Kate Martin the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) as damages for the loss suffered by her as a result of the accident to her parents."

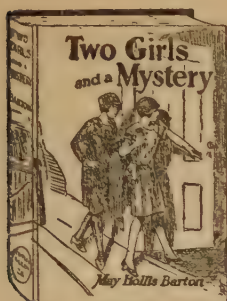
That evening, sitting on the porch with the full moon peering through the lattice work, Frank's arm stole around Kate's shoulders. We can imagine what he said when Kate's heart pounded loudly. There were many plans to be made, but

one of the immediate things to be seen to was the choosing of the ring.

The next day, as Kate Martin saw Frank's tall figure separating the crowd, she smiled. She had seen him coming through school crowds, through the jostling mass in Craigway, then in Conningsburg. Since then she had gloried in the purple mountains of the West, the magnificent display of flowers in California, the sun glistening in the blue-green sea. But nothing was ever so glorious as those laughing eyes just ahead.

THE END

# THE BARTON BOOKS FOR GIRLS



By MAY HOLLIS BARTON

*12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. With colored Jacket.*

*Price 50 cents per volume. Postage 10 cents additional.*

*May Hollis Barton is a new writer for girls who is bound to win instant popularity. Her style is somewhat of a reminder of that of Louisa M. Alcott, but thoroughly up-to-date in plot and action. Clean tales that all the girls will enjoy reading.*

1. THE GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY
2. THREE GIRL CHUMS AT LAUREL HALL
3. NELL GRAYSON'S RANCHING DAYS
4. FOUR LITTLE WOMEN OF ROXBY
5. PLAIN JANE AND PRETTY BETTY
6. LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE
7. HAZEL HOOD'S STRANGE DISCOVERY
8. TWO GIRLS AND A MYSTERY
9. THE GIRLS OF LIGHTHOUSE ISLAND
10. KATE MARTIN'S PROBLEM
11. THE GIRL IN THE TOP FLAT
12. THE SEARCH FOR PEGGY ANN
13. SALLIE'S TEST OF SKILL
14. CHARLOTTE CROSS AND AUNT DEB
15. VIRGINIA'S VENTURE

*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

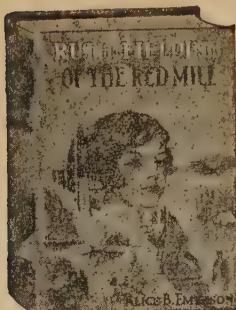
---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

# THE RUTH FIELDING SERIES

By ALICE B. EMERSON



12mo. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors.  
Price 50 cents per volume. Postage 10  
cents additional.

Ruth Fielding was an orphan and came to live with her miserly uncle. Her adventures and travels make stories that will hold the interest of every reader.

Ruth Fielding is a character that will live in juvenile fiction.

## 1. RUTH FIELDING OF THE RED MILL

2. RUTH FIELDING AT BRIARWOOD HALL
3. RUTH FIELDING AT SNOW CAMP
4. RUTH FIELDING AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT
5. RUTH FIELDING AT SILVER RANCH
6. RUTH FIELDING ON CLIFF ISLAND
7. RUTH FIELDING AT SUNRISE FARM
8. RUTH FIELDING AND THE GYPSIES
9. RUTH FIELDING IN MOVING PICTURES
10. RUTH FIELDING DOWN IN DIXIE
11. RUTH FIELDING AT COLLEGE
12. RUTH FIELDING IN THE SADDLE
13. RUTH FIELDING IN THE RED CROSS
14. RUTH FIELDING AT THE WAR FRONT
15. RUTH FIELDING HOMEWARD BOUND
16. RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST
17. RUTH FIELDING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST
18. RUTH FIELDING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE
19. RUTH FIELDING TREASURE HUNTING
20. RUTH FIELDING IN THE FAR NORTH
21. RUTH FIELDING AT GOLDEN PASS
22. RUTH FIELDING IN ALASKA
23. RUTH FIELDING AND HER GREAT SCENARIO
24. RUTH FIELDING AT CAMERON HALL
25. RUTH FIELDING CLEARING HER NAME
26. RUTH FIELDING IN TALKING PICTURES
27. RUTH FIELDING AND BABY JUNE
28. RUTH FIELDING AND HER DOUBLE
29. RUTH FIELDING AND HER GREATEST TRIUMPH
30. RUTH FIELDING AND HER CROWNING VICTORY

These books may be purchased wherever books are sold  
*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers      New York



# MYSTERY BOOKS FOR GIRLS



12mo. Illustrated. Colored jackets.

Price 50 cents per volume.

Postage 10 cents additional.

## THE JADE NECKLACE,

by PEMBERTON GINTHER

Roslyn Blake possesses a necklace of ancient Chinese design and of mysterious origin. It brings both hope and fear. Strange events result in its loss, but her courage and the friendship of Dr. Briggs help her to solve the mystery.

## THE THIRTEENTH SPOON,

by PEMBERTON GINTHER

A mystery story for girls, that holds the interest from the first word to the last. Twelve famous Apostle spoons, and the thirteenth, the Master Spoon vanish. Who has stolen them? Carol's courage solves the mystery in an original and exciting story.

## THE SECRET STAIR,

by PEMBERTON GINTHER

The 'Van Dirk Treasure' is a manuscript jewelled and illuminated. The treasure is hidden in the old family mansion where Sally Shaw goes to live. Strange events occur. The house is thought to be haunted. The Book vanishes. Its recovery makes a most unusual story.

## THE DOOR IN THE MOUNTAIN,

by ISOLA L. FORRESTER

The four McLeans, three boys and a plucky girl, lived just outside of Frisbee, Arizona, on Los Flores Canyon, thirty miles from even the railroad. But adventure lurks in unexpected places, and when Katherine and Peter chanced on the Door in the Mountain, a legend that held considerable mystery for the community, the adventure proved the courage and ingenuity of all the McLeans.

## SECRET OF THE DARK HOUSE,

by FRANCES Y. YOUNG

Jean had an inquiring mind, and any event that she could not understand aroused her curiosity to the 'nth degree. A charming stranger in the schoolroom, a taciturn chauffeur, a huge dark house, strange robberies in the neighborhood, and a secretive old man who always wore a disguise, combined to put Jean on a hunt that before it was over involved brothers, sisters, police, famous detectives, Smuff, her dog, in one grand mystery story that every girl will enjoy reading.

These books may be purchased wherever books are sold

*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

# THE MAXIE SERIES

By ELSIE B. GARDNER



*12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. With colored Jacket.*

*Price 50 cents per volume. Postage 10 cents additional.*

MAXIE is such an interesting, delightful, amusing character that everyone will love and long remember her. She has the ability of turning every event in her life into the most absorbing and astounding adventures, and when she is sent to visit her only other Uncle in the British West Indies, it proves to be the beginning of not only an entirely new mode of living, but a series of tremendously thrilling adventures and stirring deeds that every girl will thoroughly enjoy.

1. **MAXIE, AN ADORABLE GIRL**  
*or Her Adventures in the British West Indies*
2. **MAXIE IN VENEZUELA**  
*or The Clue to the Diamond Mine*
3. **MAXIE, SEARCHING FOR HER PARENTS**  
*or The Mystery in Australian Waters*
4. **MAXIE AT BRINKSOME HALL**  
*or Strange Adventures with Her Chums*

These books may be purchased wherever books are sold  
*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

---

**CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers**      **New York**

# KAY TRACEY MYSTERY STORIES

By FRANCES K. JUDD



*Meet clever Kay Tracey, who, though only sixteen, solves mysteries in a surprising manner. Working on clues which she assembles, this surprising heroine supplies the solution to cases that have baffled professional sleuths. The KAY TRACEY MYSTERY STORIES will grip a reader from start to finish.*

*12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in color. Price 50 cents per volume.*

*Postage 10 cents additional.*

## 1. THE SECRET OF THE RED SCARF

A case of mistaken identity at a masquerade leads Kay into a delightful but mysterious secret.

## 2. THE STRANGE ECHO

Lost Lake had two mysteries—an old one and a new one. Kay, visiting there, solves both of them by deciphering a strange echo.

## 3. THE MYSTERY OF THE SWAYING CURTAINS

Heavy draperies swaying in a lonely mansion give the clue which is needed to solve a mystery that has defied professional investigators but proves to be fun for the attractive and clever Kay Tracey.

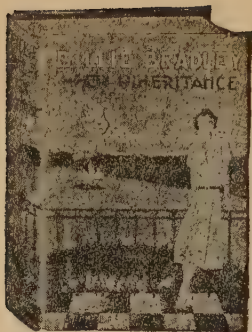
## 4. THE SHADOW ON THE DOOR

Was the shadow on the door made by a human being or an animal? Apparently without explanation Kay Tracey, after some exciting work solved the mystery and was able to help a small child out of an unfortunate situation.

---

---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers      New York



## BILLIE BRADLEY SERIES

By JANET D. WHEELER

12mo. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors.  
Price 50 cents per volume. Postage 10 cents  
additional.

A delightful series for girls who enjoy adventure and humor. The wholesome spirit and joyous youthfulness of Miss Wheeler's stories make of each new reader a new friend, and the reading of each succeeding volume further cements the friendship for the characters of Billie Bradley and her chums.

### 1. BILLIE BRADLEY AND HER INHERITANCE

*or The Queer Homestead at Cherry Corners*

Billie Bradley fell heir to an old homestead that was unoccupied and located far away in a lonely section of the country.

### 2. BILLIE BRADLEY AT THREE-TOWERS HALL

*or Leading a Needed Rebellion*

Three-Towers Hall was a boarding school for girls. For a time after Billie arrived all went well.

### 3. BILLIE BRADLEY ON LIGHTHOUSE ISLAND

*or The Mystery of the Wreck*

There was a severe storm that wrecked a ship from which three little children were washed ashore.

### 4. BILLIE BRADLEY AND HER CLASSMATES

*or The Secret of the Locked Tower*

Billie Bradley and her chums courageously come to the rescue of several little children who have broken through the ice.

### 5. BILLIE BRADLEY AT TWIN LAKES

*or Jolly School Girls Afloat and Ashore*

A tale of the out-of-doors. Billie and her chums become acquainted with a strange girl, and help her escape from her guardian.

### 6. BILLIE BRADLEY AT TREASURE COVE

*or The Old Sailor's Secret*

How Billie Bradley heard of the Treasure, and how the girls meet with excitement, adventures, and strange characters in their endeavor to discover the old sailor's secret.

### 7. BILLIE BRADLEY AT SUN DIAL LODGE

*or School Chums Solving a Mystery*

The recovery of a stolen treasure chest forms the groundwork of an exciting story, that reveals Billie's ability at unraveling a mystery.

### 8. BILLIE BRADLEY AND THE SCHOOL MYSTERY

*or The Girl from Oklahoma*

How Billie clears up a mystery in which she is apparently implicated makes delightful reading.

### 9. BILLIE BRADLEY WINNING THE TROPHY

Billie deciphers the mysterious message and after an exciting time wins the trophy.

These books may be purchased wherever books are sold  
*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

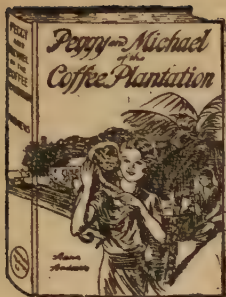
---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

# PEGGY LEE SERIES

By ANNA ANDREWS



*12mo. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors.  
Price 50 cents per volume.  
Postage 10 cents additional.*

*A charming series of stories of a young American girl, Peggy Lee, living with her family (including many unusual pets) on a large coffee plantation in Central America, and her many adventures there and in New York.*

*The action is rapid, full of fun, and takes the reader not only to many interesting places in Central America, but in this country as well, where Peggy attends a school for girls. The incidents are cleverly brought out, and Peggy in her wistful way, proves in her many adventures to be a brave girl and an endearing heroine to her friends and readers.*

- 1. PEGGY AND MICHAEL OF THE COFFEE PLANTATION**
- 2. PEGGY LEE OF THE GOLDEN THISTLE PLANTATION**
- 3. PEGGY LEE AND THE MYSTERIOUS ISLANDS**
- 4. PEGGY LEE, SOPHOMORE**

**These books may be purchased wherever books are sold**

*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

---

**CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers**

**New York**



# THE BETTY GORDON SERIES

By ALICE B. EMERSON

Author of the "RUTH FIELDING SERIES"



*12mo. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors.  
Price 50 cents per volume. Postage 10 cents  
additional.*

*A new series of stories bound to make  
this writer more popular than ever with her  
host of girl readers. Every one will want  
to know Betty Gordon, and every one will  
be sure to love her.*

1. BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM
2. BETTY GORDON IN WASHINGTON
3. BETTY GORDON IN THE LAND OF OIL
4. BETTY GORDON AT BOARDING SCHOOL
5. BETTY GORDON AT MOUNTAIN CAMP
6. BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK
7. BETTY GORDON AND HER SCHOOL CHUMS
8. BETTY GORDON AT RAINBOW RANCH
9. BETTY GORDON IN MEXICAN WILDS
10. BETTY GORDON AND THE LOST PEARLS
11. BETTY GORDON ON THE CAMPUS
12. BETTY GORDON AND THE HALE TWINS
13. BETTY GORDON AT MYSTERY FARM
14. BETTY GORDON ON NO-TRAIL ISLAND
15. BETTY GORDON AND THE MYSTERY GIRL

*Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue*

---

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York



N. Snellenburg & Co.

S4 5983

504

